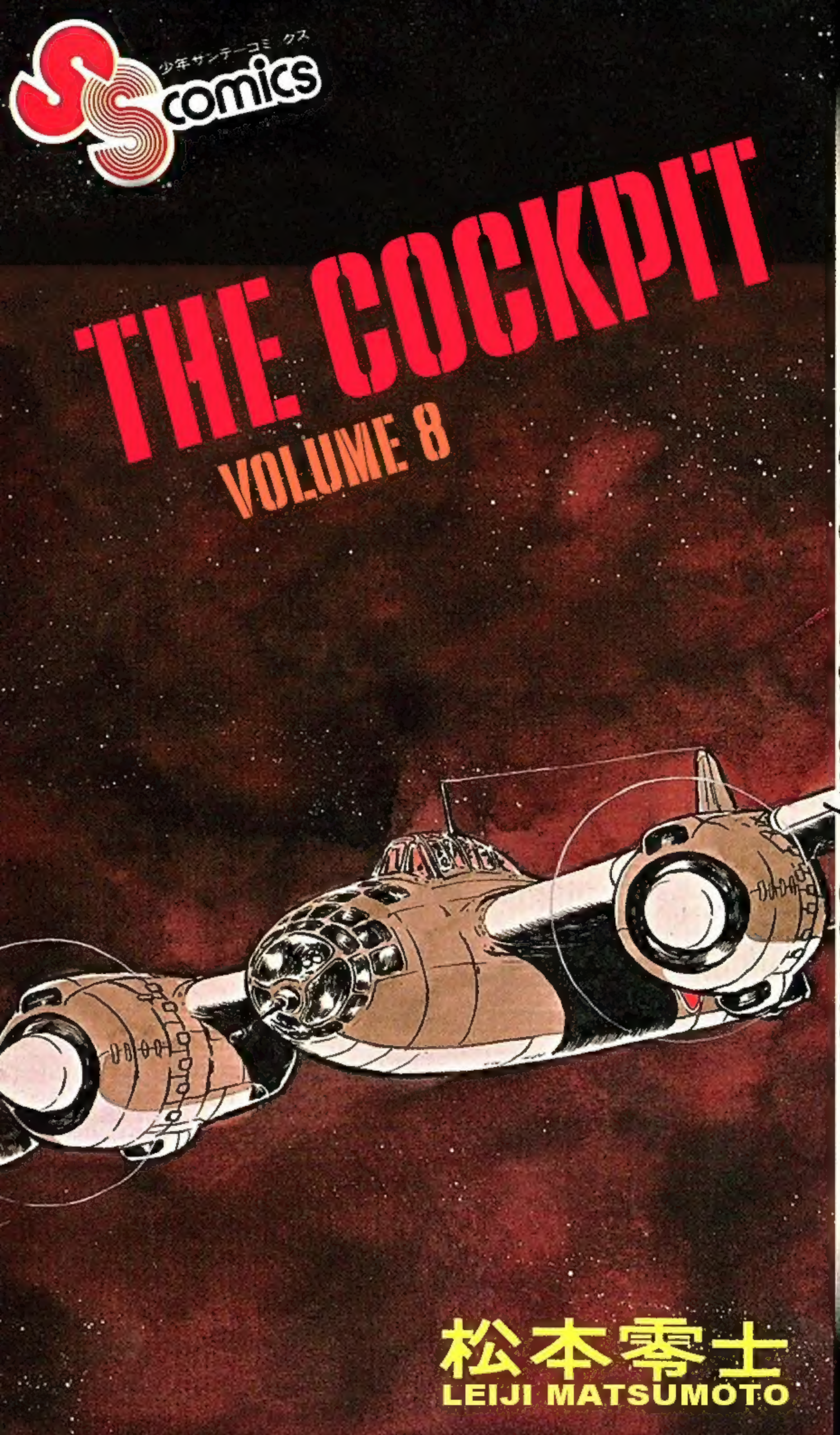
少年サンデーコミックス

Scomics

THE COCKPIT

VOLUME 8



Shonen Sunday Comics

松本零士

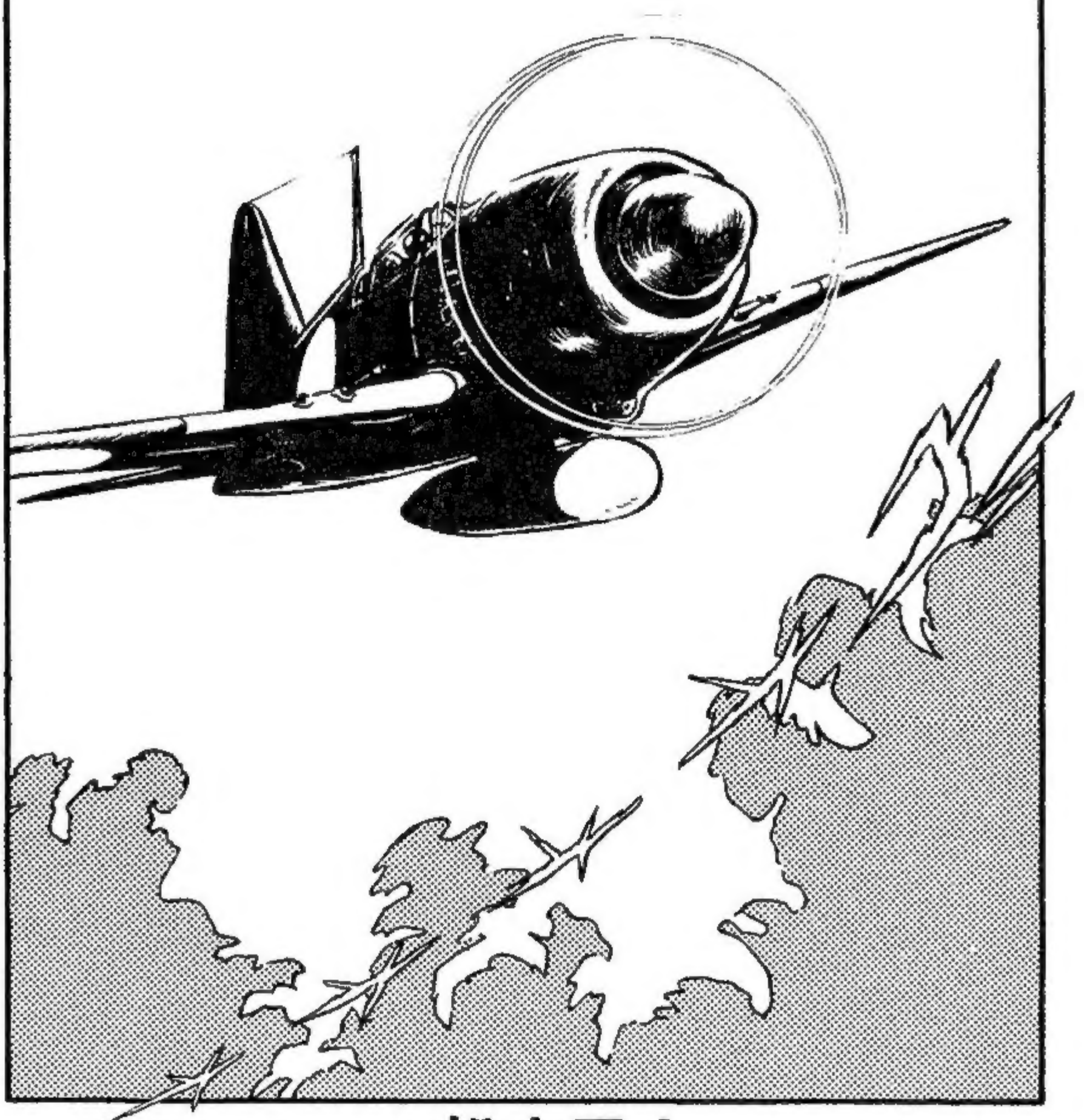
LEIJI MATSUMOTO

NOTICE!

Japanese comics or *manga* are read from right to left across the page instead of left to right. Also, if your reader supports Japanese *manga* format (back to front instead of front to back) then set it so for easier reading. Thanks!

★ THE COCKPIT - VOLUME 8 ★

RISING THUNDERBOLT
AND OTHER STORIES



松本零士／BY L・MATSUMOTO

THE COCKPIT (aka BATTLEFIELD) Volume 8: Rising Thunderbolt and other stories

by Leiji Matsumoto

A Google Translate ® adaptation

English language cleanup
by Richard Mandel

Released in 2026 by fans for fans
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■松本零士■
LEIJI MATSUMOTO

EDITOR'S NOTE

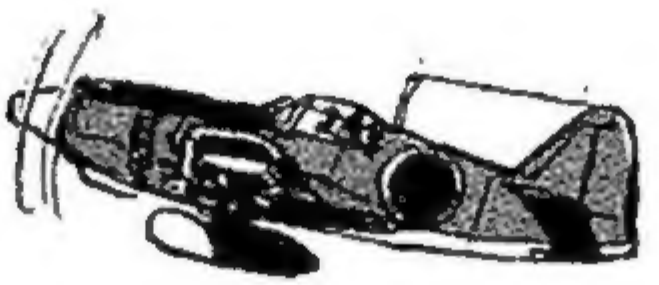
This manga was "scanlated" from the original Japanese by feeding the individual pages through the free Google Translate AI program and then the results cleaned up considerably for better reading by English speaking audiences. Google Translate AI is a far from perfect tool as I write this (2026) but as I said it was free and you can't beat that with a stick. The end results were barely readable and I've had to both rewrite and interpolate considerably in places in order to produce an English adaptation that reads well.

My apologies to all of you who know the language. All I can say is that the rest of us have waited this long for some kind (*any* kind) of English language adaptation of this classic Leiji Matsumoto manga. If you can and are willing to do better then by all means feel free to do so. I won't be offended. I'll enjoy your effort with everyone else who reads it. (R.M.)

These are stories of men, women, and the machines of war.

TALES FROM THE COCKPIT

RISING THUNDER-BOLT



WHEN SOMETHING UNEXPECTED HAPPENS, HUMANS BECOME ANXIOUS. WHEN SOMETHING PHYSICALLY IMPOSSIBLE HAPPENS, HUMANS TEND TO BECOME AFRAID. ONCE THAT THRESHOLD OF FEAR IS CROSSED THEN HUMANS TEND TO LOSE GOOD JUDGEMENT.

SIR EDMUND BART, PSYCHOLOGIST (1827)

TO OUR RIGHT! IT'S A JAP TWIN-ENGINE PLANE AT OUR ALTITUDE!

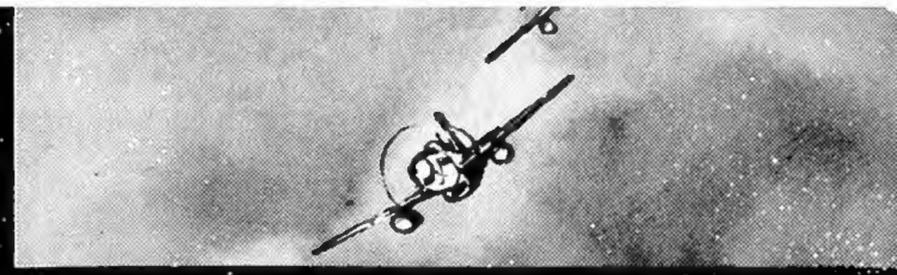
HMMM ... THAT'S NO BETTY ... IT'S A FRANCES* SCOUT PLANE! WHAT'S IT DOING ALL THE WAY OUT HERE? LET'S GO SEE!

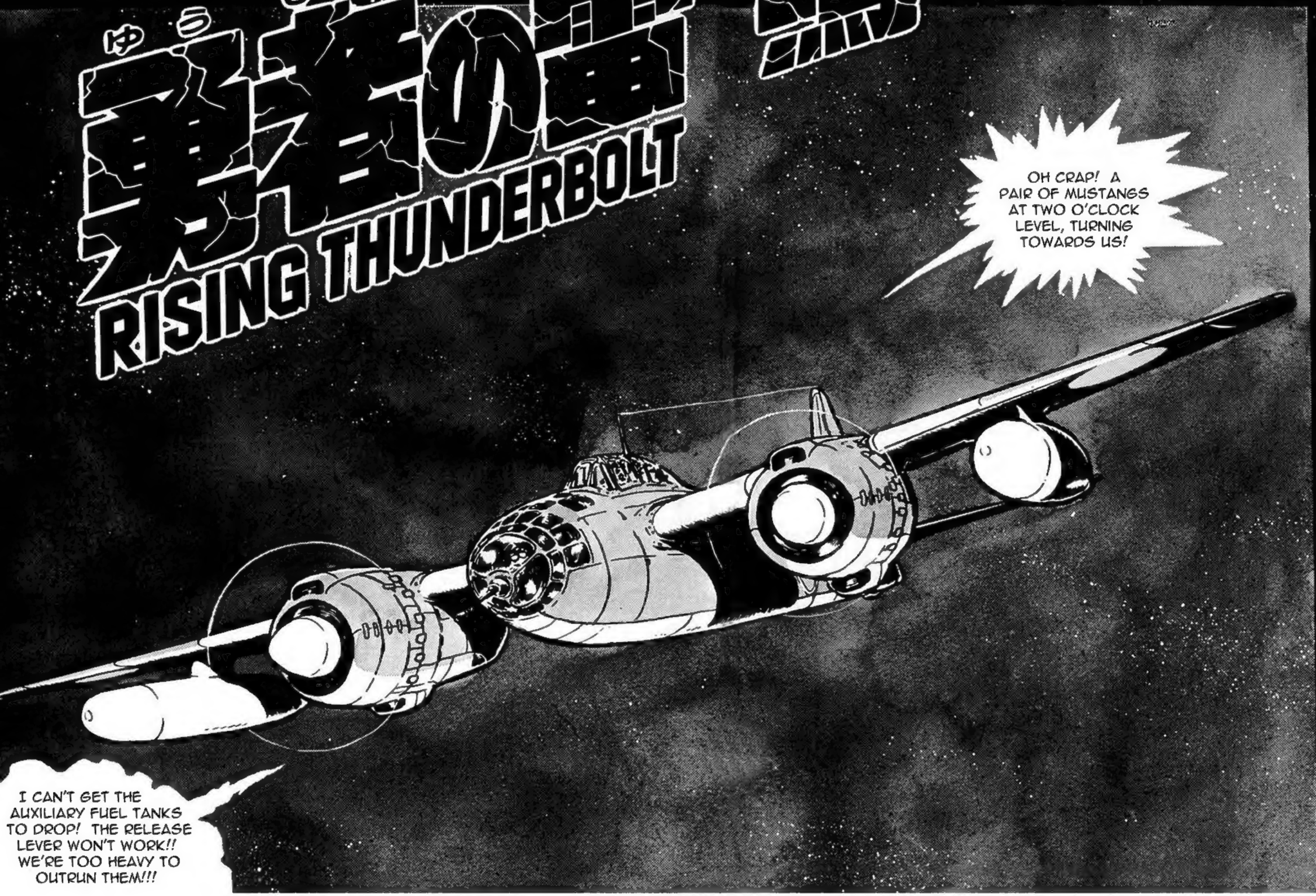
666

(*) "IT'S A FRANCES ...!" THE YOKOSUKA P1Y GINGA. "FRANCES" WAS ITS ALLIED CODE NAME.

SPIRIT OF THE BRAVE

勇者の雷鳴
RISING THUNDERBOLT





I SEEM TO RECALL THAT THE JAPS HAD A LOT OF PROBLEMS GETTING THE FRANCES INTO SERVICE. ALL KINDS OF TEETHING TROUBLES AND SUCH.

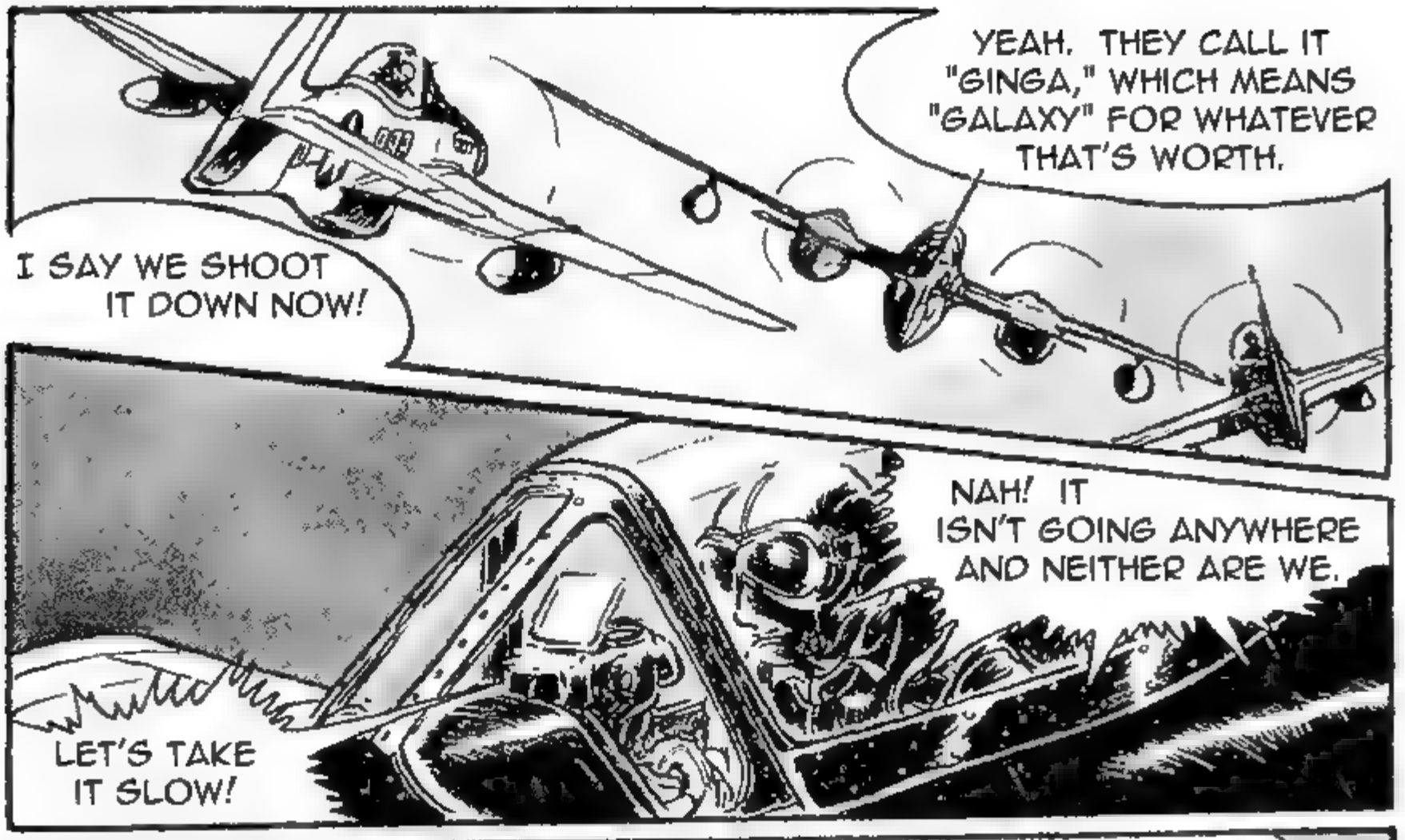
SURE IS PRETTY, THOUGH. FOR A JAP PLANE.

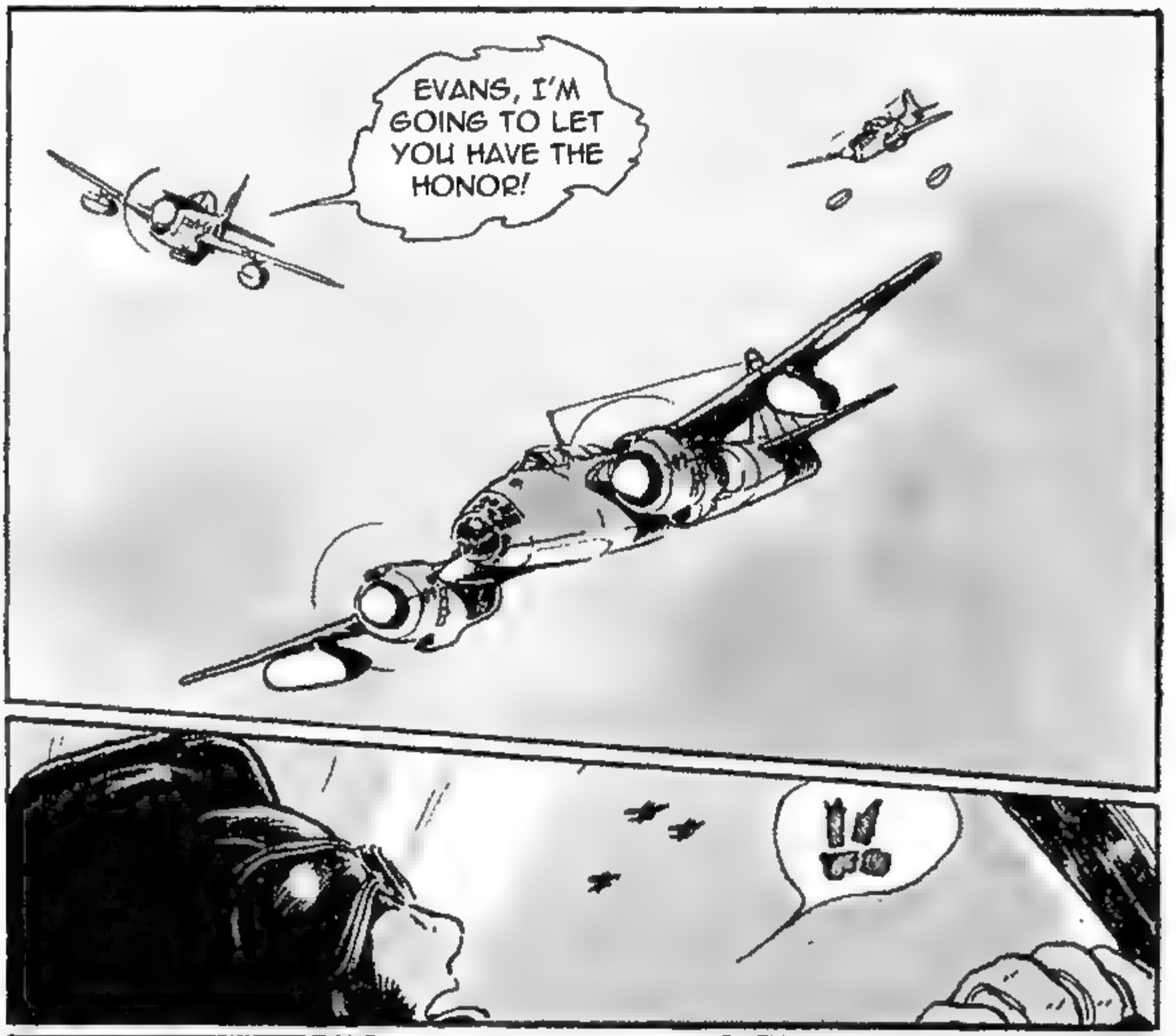
WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS WHY ARE THEY CARRYING SO MUCH FUEL? THAT'S NOT NORMAL.

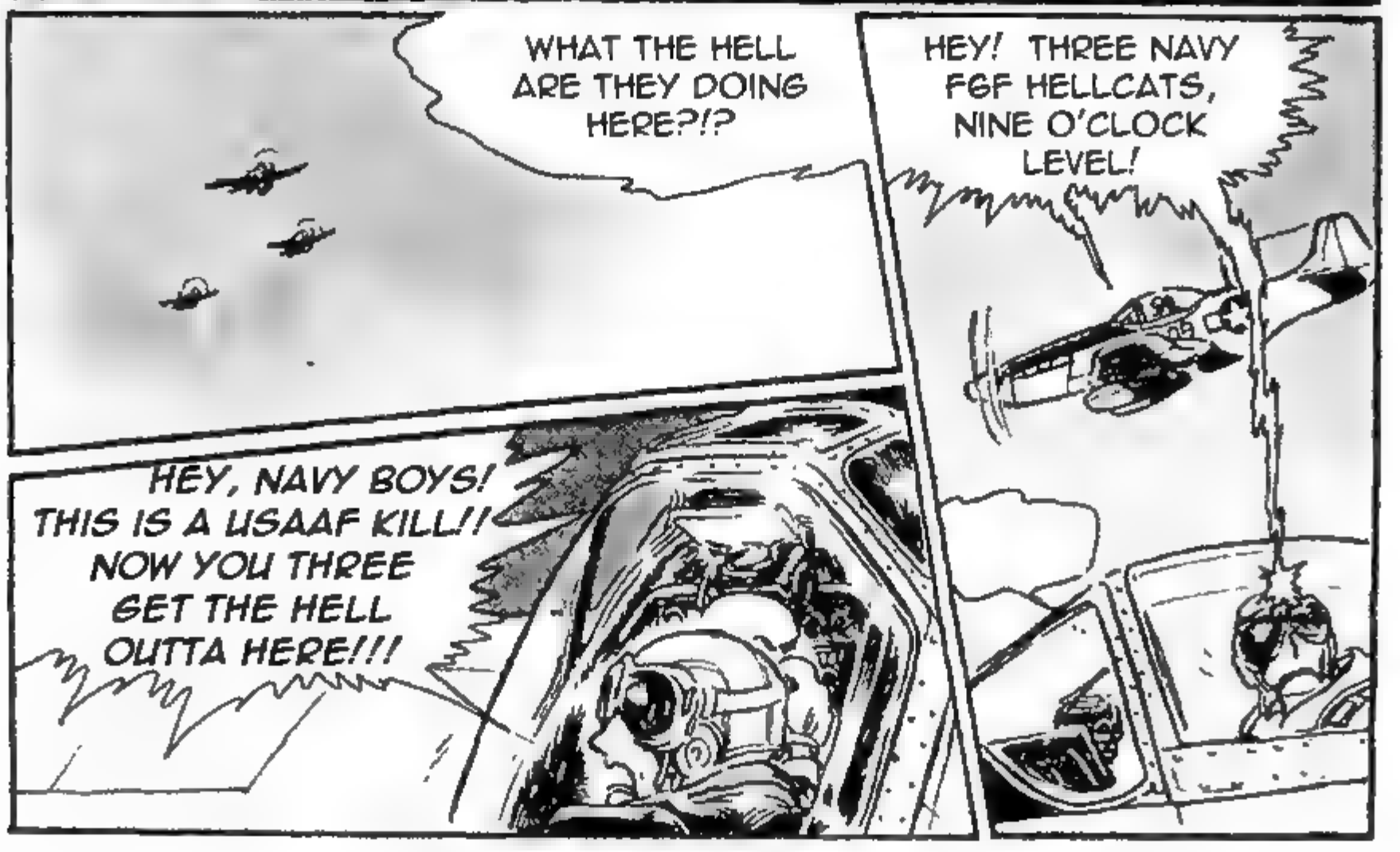
GIVEN HOW BIG THOSE TWIN DROP TANKS ARE, THEY MIGHT HAVE COME ALL THE WAY HERE FROM JAPAN ITSELF.

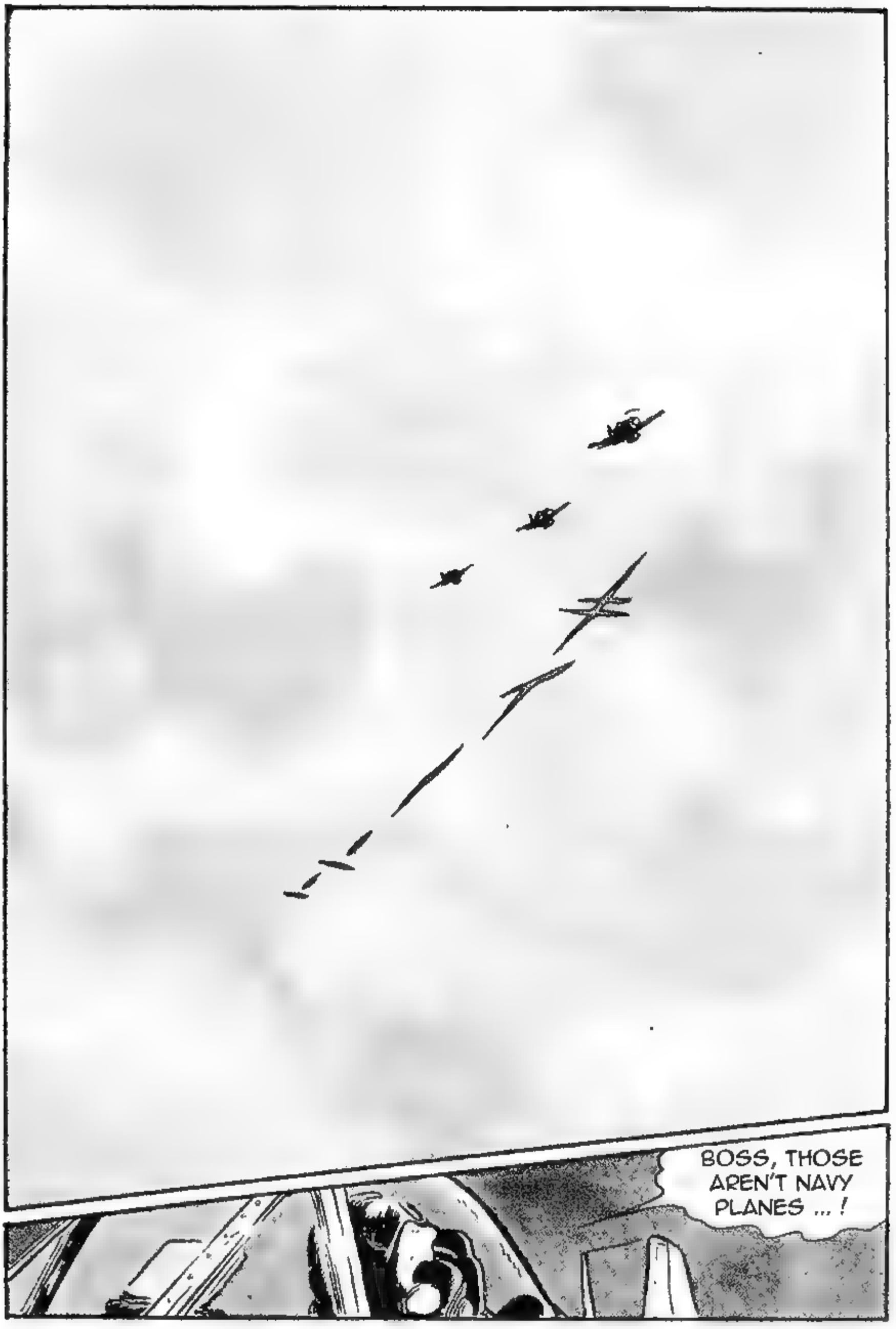
YOU'D THINK THEY'D HAVE DROPPED THEIR TANKS AND RAN FOR IT BY NOW.

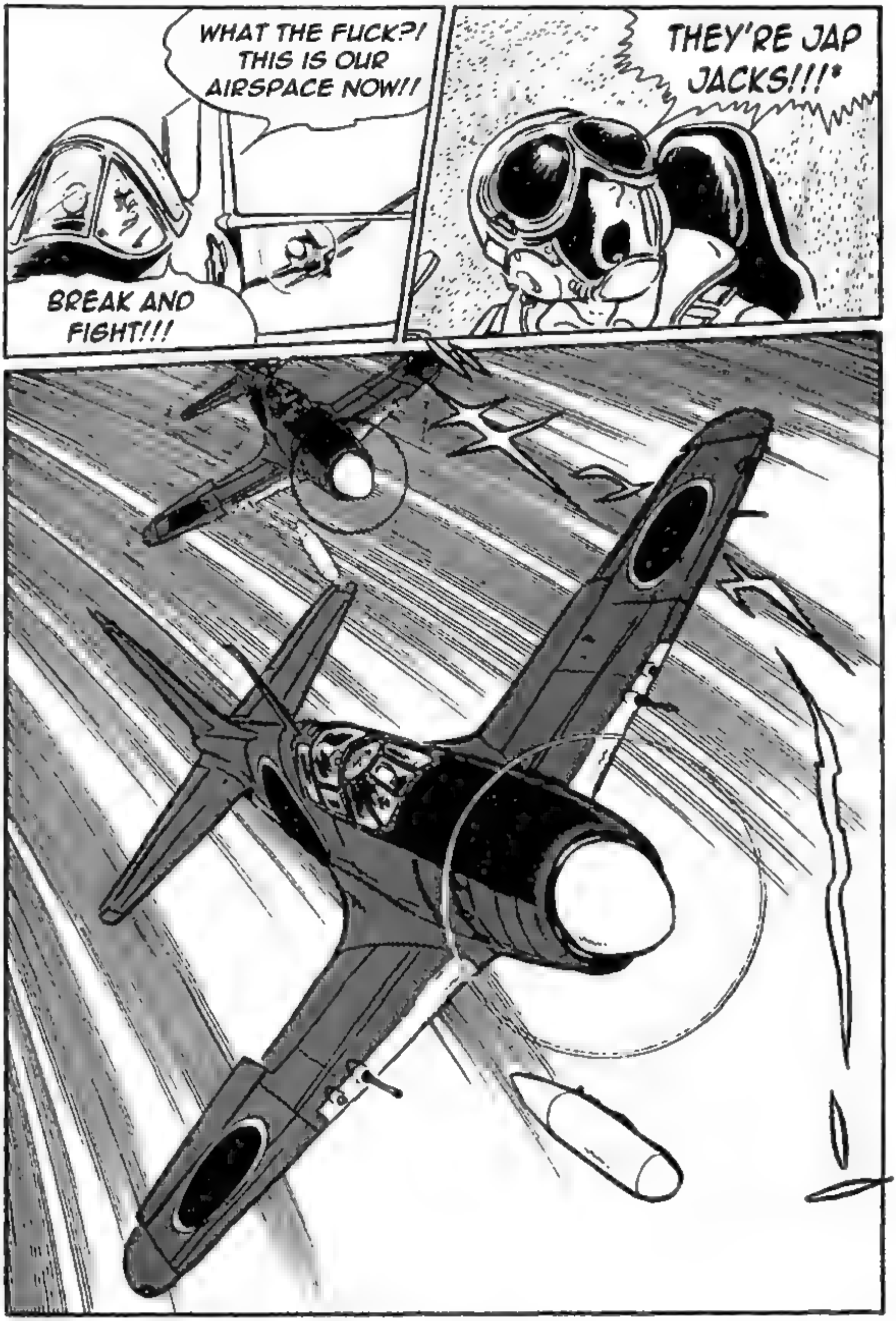
MAYBE THEY CAN'T. PERHAPS THE RELEASE MECHANISM IS JAMMED.


YEAH. THEY CALL IT "GINGA," WHICH MEANS "GALAXY" FOR WHATEVER THAT'S WORTH.
I SAY WE SHOOT IT DOWN NOW!
NAH! IT ISN'T GOING ANYWHERE AND NEITHER ARE WE.
LET'S TAKE IT SLOW!
WE'LL BE LIKE CATS PLAYING WITH OUR FOOD BEFORE WE, YOU KNOW.
666

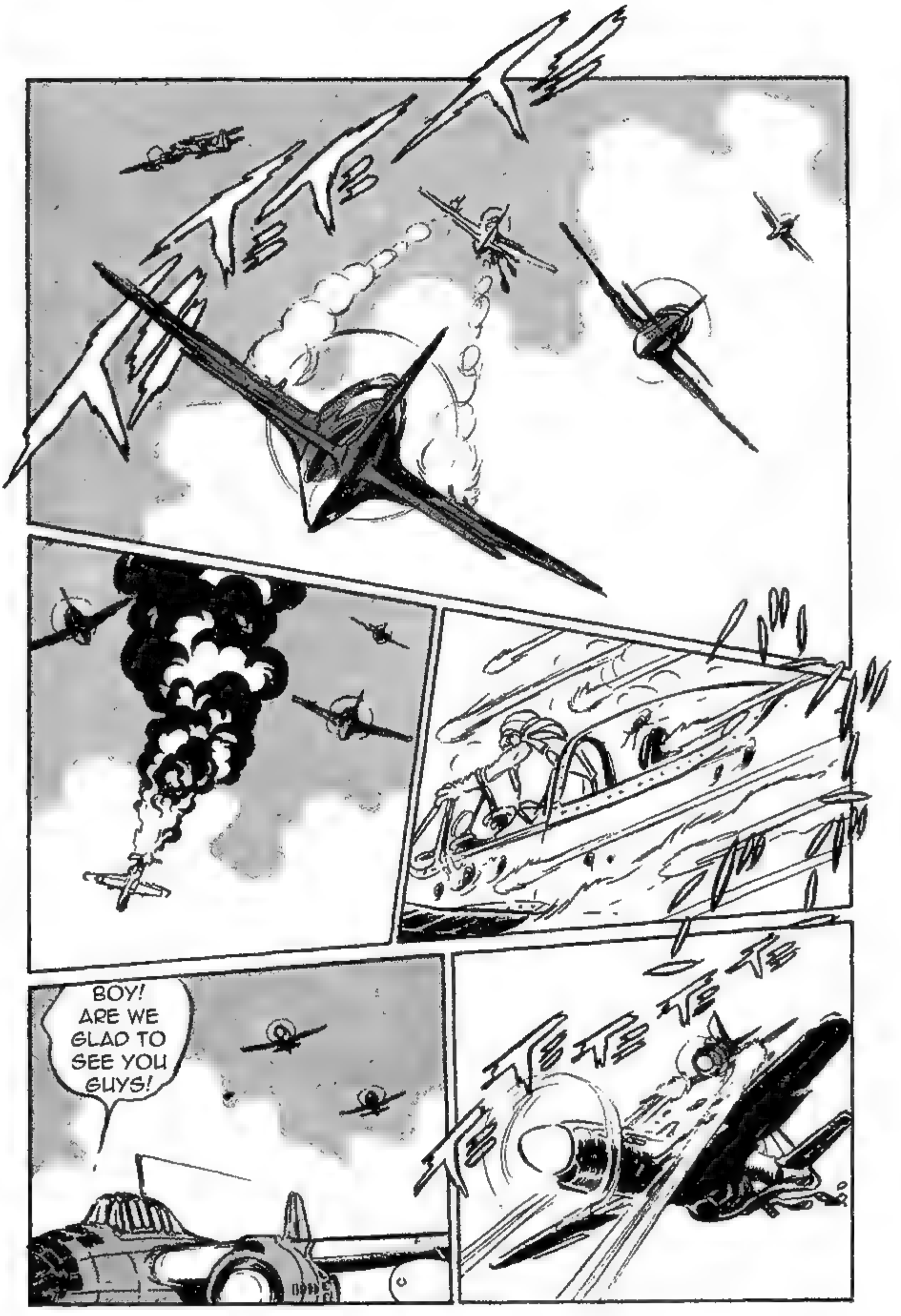

EVANS, I'M GOING TO LET YOU HAVE THE HONOR!


WHAT THE HELL ARE THEY DOING HERE?!?
HEY! THREE NAVY F6F HELLCATS, NINE O'CLOCK LEVEL!
HEY, NAVY BOYS! THIS IS A USAAF KILL!! NOW YOU THREE GET THE HELL OUTTA HERE!!!


BOSS, THOSE AREN'T NAVY PLANES ... !



13 (*) "THEY'RE JAP JACKS!" - THE MITSUBISHI J2M RAIDEN, ALLIED CODE NAME "JACK" AND POSSIBLY THE BEST JAPANESE SHORT-RANGE FIGHTER OF THE LATER PART OF THE WAR. THE JAPANESE NAME "RAIDEN" CAN BE TRANSLATED AS "THUNDERBOLT" (MORE ACCURATELY "LIGHTNING BOLT"); HENCE MATSUMOTO'S STORY TITLE.


BOY! ARE WE GLAD TO SEE YOU GUYS!

THOSE MUST BE RAIDENS!

I HEARD THEY'D SENT A BUNCH TO OUR OUTER BASES!

TANCHO ONE*, AND WE'RE FINE.

WHAT'S YOUR CALL SIGN, AND IS EVERYTHING OKAY OVER THERE?

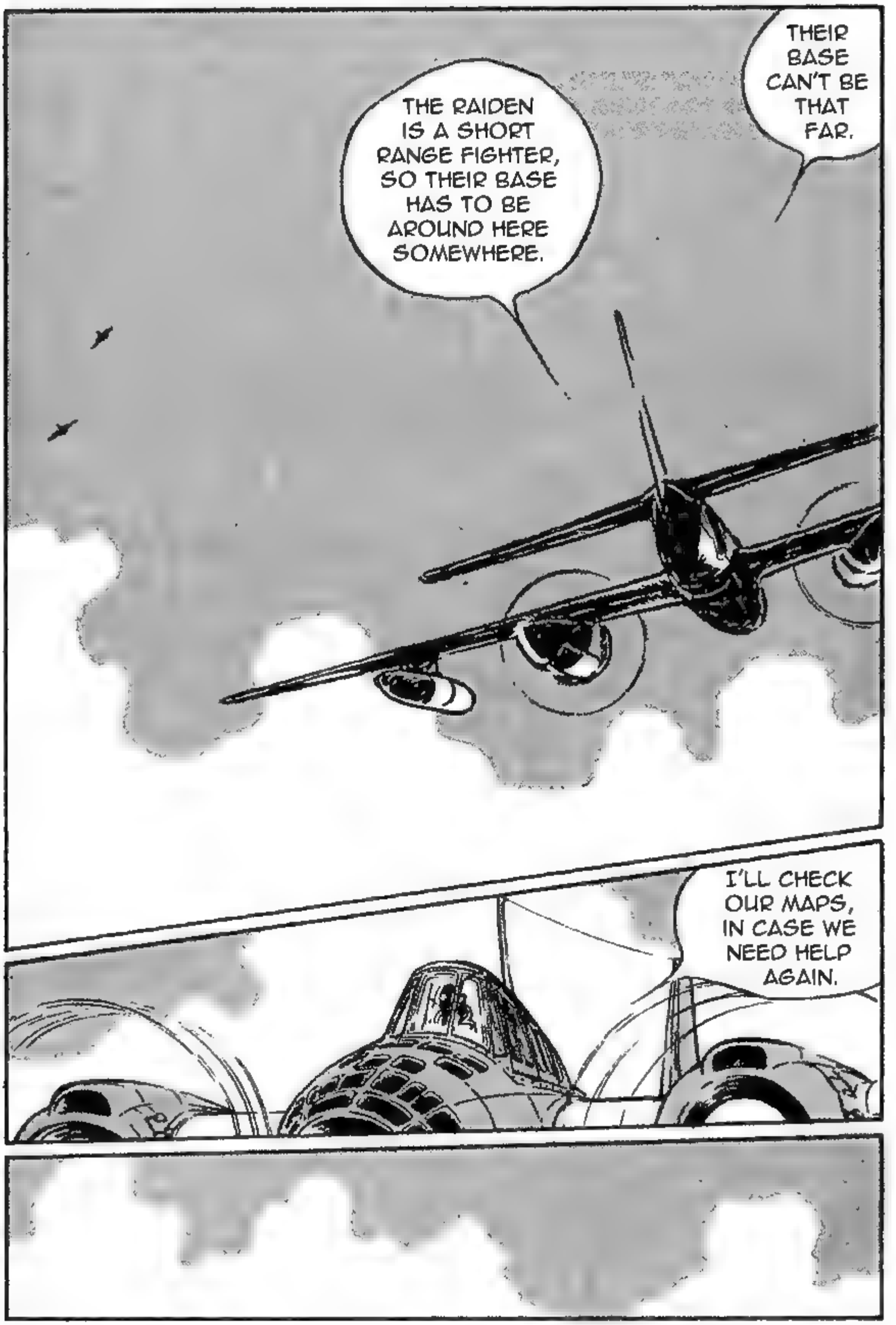
THIS IS MOSQUITO ONE TO THE BIG BIRD.

WE'RE ON A SPECIAL MISSION FOR THE IMPERIAL HIGH COMMAND! THANKS, AND WE'LL BE ON OUR WAY!

WE'RE PART OF A SPECIAL UNIT ATTACHED TO THE 707TH RECON BATALLION!

ROGER THAT! GOOD LUCK TO YOU!

(*) *TANCHO* - THE JAPANESE NAME FOR THE RARE RED-CROWNED CRANE, MORE COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE JAPANESE CRANE HERE IN THE WEST.


THEIR BASE CAN'T BE THAT FAR.
THE RAIDEN IS A SHORT RANGE FIGHTER, SO THEIR BASE HAS TO BE AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE.
I'LL CHECK OUR MAPS, IN CASE WE NEED HELP AGAIN.

POSITIVE, SIR.

AND ALL THREE OF THEM WERE SURE IT WAS A GINGA WITH EXTRA FUEL TANKS?

I WISH I KNEW WHAT OUR HIGH COMMAND WAS UP TO. I'M JUST GLAD WE HAD THOSE NEW RAIDENS TO HELP THEM OUT.

WHAT'S IT DOING WAY OUT HERE? I MEAN, LOOK AT THIS MAP. HERE'S SAIPAN. THAT'S HOW FAR THE AMERICANS ARE NOW. THAT'S A LONG TRIP FOR ONE RECON PLANE.

RIGHT NOW IT'S THE BEST SHORT RANGE FIGHTER WE GOT. I STILL WISH THEY'D HAVE SENT US HAYATES.

THE AMERICANS HAVE TURNED SAIPAN INTO A FUCKING MAGGOT'S NEST OF B-29S FOR LONG RANGE BOMBING OF JAPAN.

WE NEED FIGHTERS WITH LEGS.

... WE'RE GOING TO GIVE THEM A LITTLE TASTE OF THEIR OWN MEDICINE.

TOMORROW, WHEN THE B-29S LAUNCH FROM SAIPAN AND HEAD FOR THE HOME ISLANDS TO FIRE BOMB THEM ...

YOU MEAN NO MORE FIRE-BOMBING? WE'RE ALL FOR THAT!

THAT'S WHAT YOUR MISSION WAS ALL ABOUT, GENTLEMEN. WE NEEDED GOOD UP-TO-DATE INTEL ON SAIPAN SO WE COULD KNOCK IT OUT.

I'M SURE THEY'RE AS MUCH FOR STOPPING THE FIREBOMBING AS US.

I'M GLAD THEY'RE TELLING THOSE RAIDEN GUYS.

SOME DAYS LATER ...

THEY JUST LEFT SAIPAN!

THERE THEY ARE, SIR! B-29'S, LARGE FORMATION!

E.T.A TO THE HOME ISLANDS APPROXIMATELY 7.5 HOURS!

YEAH! I'M GLAD THEY FINALLY CLUED US IN! I SO WANT THIS!

WELL, LET US KNOW WHEN THEY GET HERE!

PERSONALLY I THINK IT'S A GOOD PLAN, ALTHOUGH IT PUTS US AT THE FAR LIMIT OF OUR RANGE.

YOU KNOW THAT SAIPAN'S GOING TO BE CRAWLING WITH ALL KINDS OF ANTI-AIRCRAFT, PLUS THEY MIGHT KEEP SOME FIGHTERS IN RESERVE.

THEY DON'T KNOW ABOUT US.

IT TOOK A LOT OF TIME AND DECEPTION TO SET THIS UP. THIS WILL BE THE PAYOFF.

MITSUKICHI SECRET FORWARD DEFENSE BASE.

HOYA, YOU'RE A SMARTASS.

PLUS WE'RE EXPENDABLE. NONE OF US HAVE ANY LIVING FAMILY.

I KNOW. IT'S KINDA SAD.

HE'S RIGHT, YOU KNOW.

WHAT ABOUT YOU, OIZUMI?

... AND THE FIRST THING I'M GONNA DO IS GO HOME AND VISIT MY ANCESTORS.

YOU KNOW, IF I DIE ON THIS MISSION I'M COMING BACK ...

OH, BOY.

WHAT ABOUT THEM? I MISS HOME MORE.

YOU'RE ALWAYS TALKING ABOUT GOING HOME, HOYA. WHAT ABOUT GIRLS?

SLURP I MISS 'EM BOTH.

AND YOU, SIR?

I BELIEVE WE CAN. I'VE SEEN IT HAPPEN.

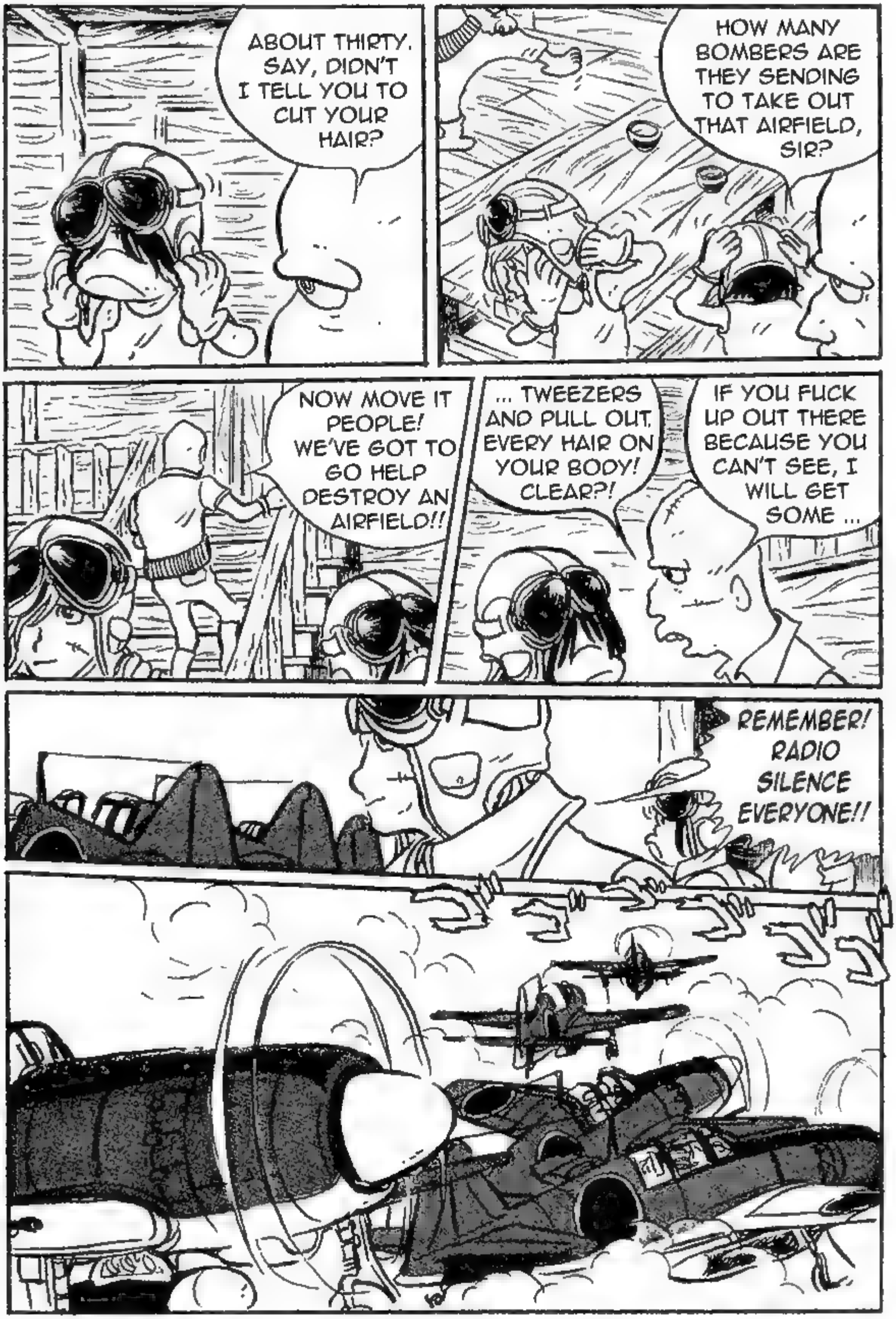
CAN WE REALLY PULL IT OFF, SIR?

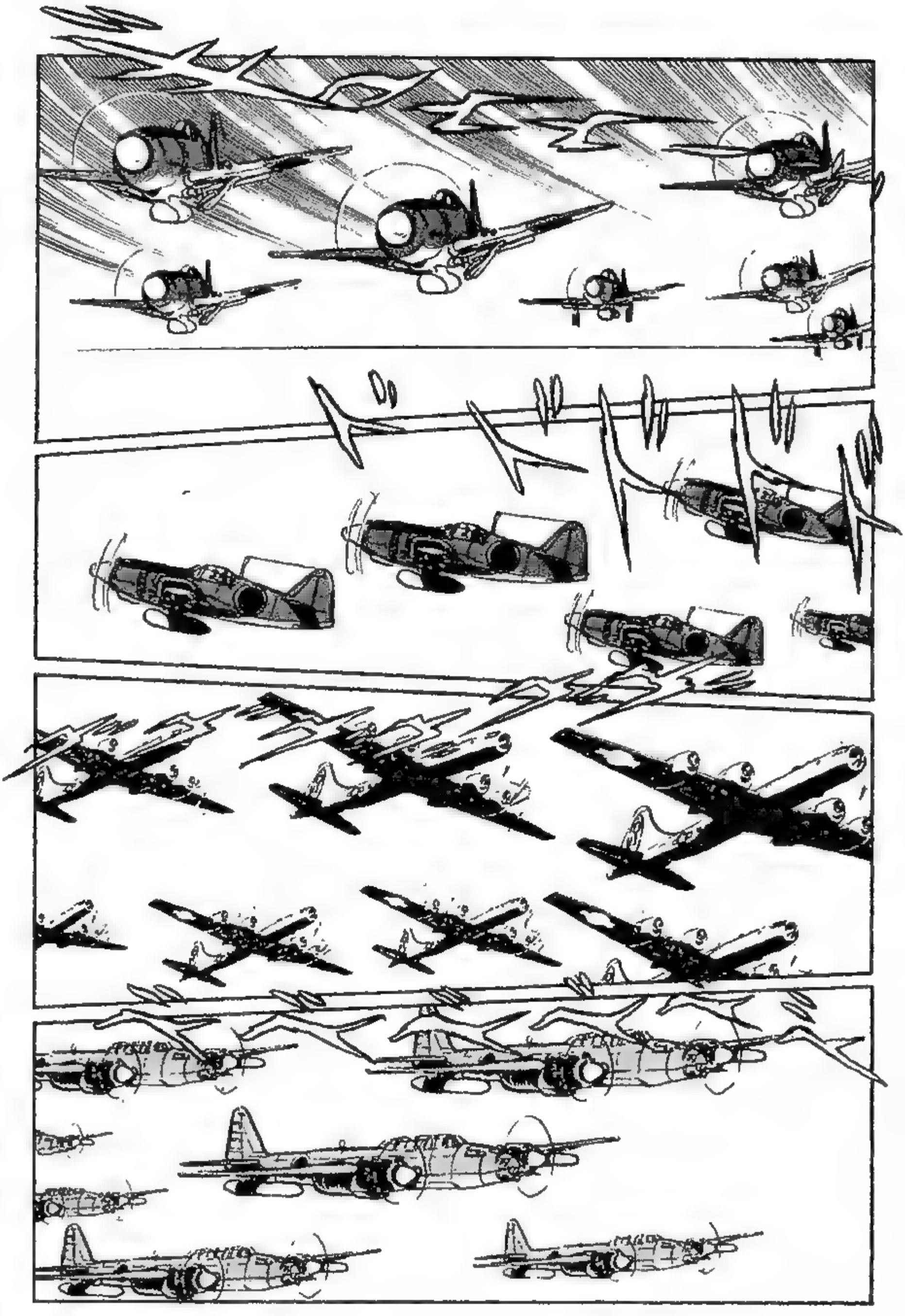
THOSE BOMBERS WON'T MAKE IT THERE WITHOUT US.

BUT WE'VE GOT A JOB TO DO, GENTS AND ONLY WE CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN.

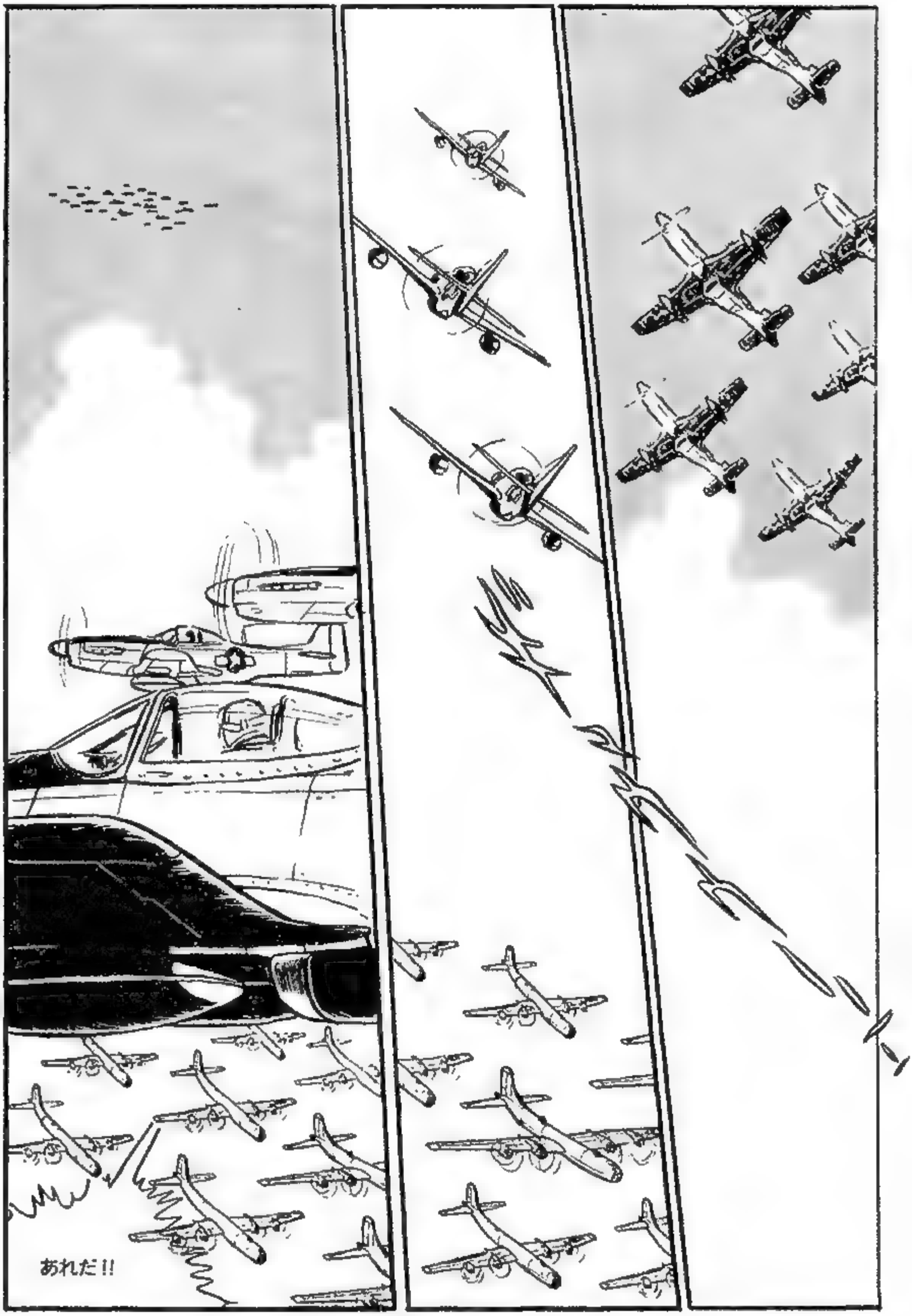
MY LAST MISSION BEFORE MY PROMOTION ... YES ...

WE CAN AND WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN, PEOPLE! WE WILL STOP THE FIREBOMBING OF OUR HOMELAND!!


ABOUT THIRTY. SAY, DIDN'T I TELL YOU TO CUT YOUR HAIR?
HOW MANY BOMBERS ARE THEY SENDING TO TAKE OUT THAT AIRFIELD, SIR?
NOW MOVE IT PEOPLE! WE'VE GOT TO GO HELP DESTROY AN AIRFIELD!!
... TWEEZERS AND PULL OUT EVERY HAIR ON YOUR BODY! CLEAR?!
IF YOU FUCK UP OUT THERE BECAUSE YOU CAN'T SEE, I WILL GET SOME ...
REMEMBER! RADIO SILENCE EVERYONE!!



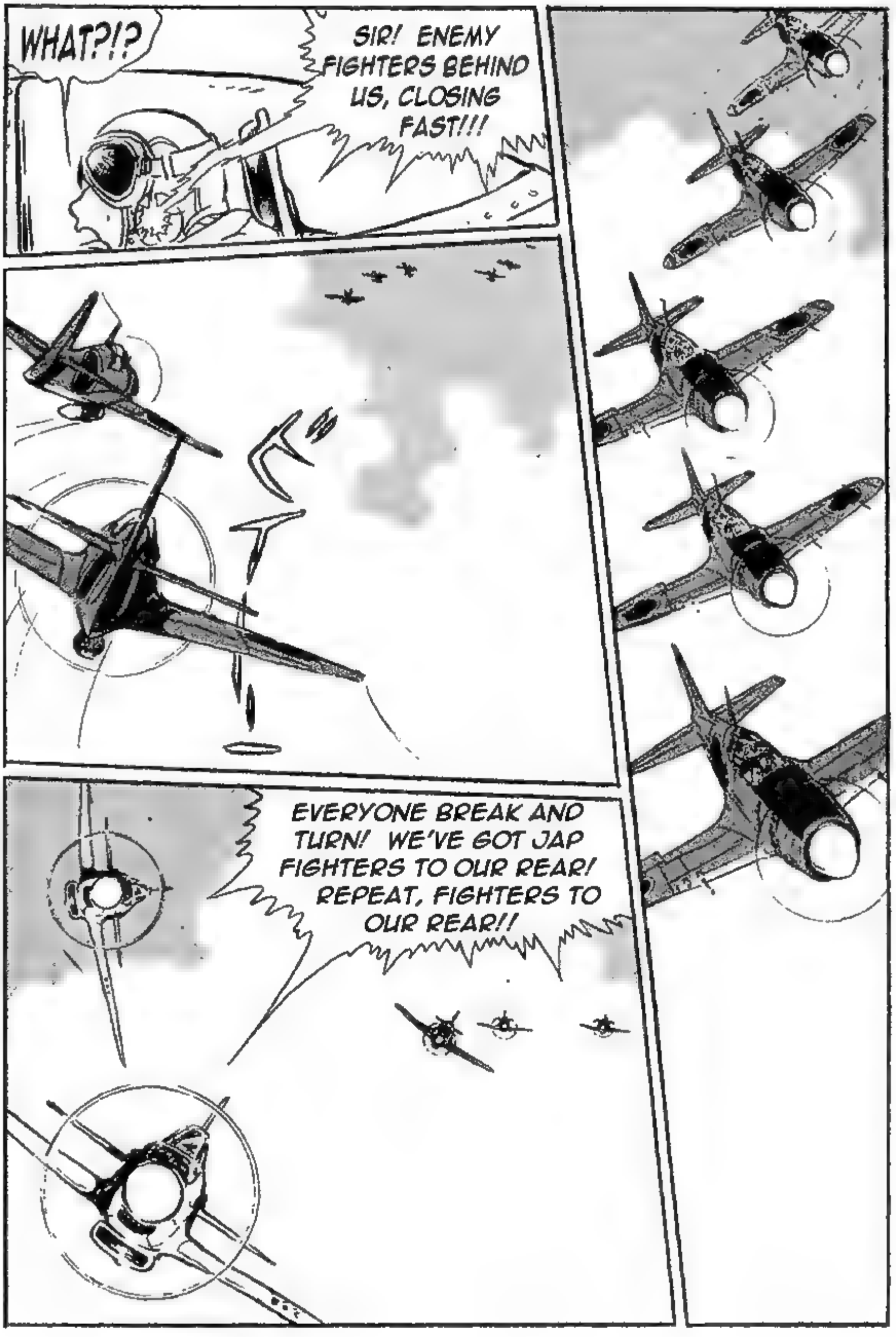
RADAR CONTACT! ABOUT THIRTY ENEMY PLANES TO THE REAR OF OUR B-29S!
THEY'RE HEADING THE WRONG WAY! TOWARDS US!!
ALL RIGHT PEOPLE, LET'S DO THIS!!
LET'S GO KNOCK THEM DOWN!!!
THOSE JAPS ARE UP TO SOMETHING SNEAKY! WELL, NOT TODAY!!

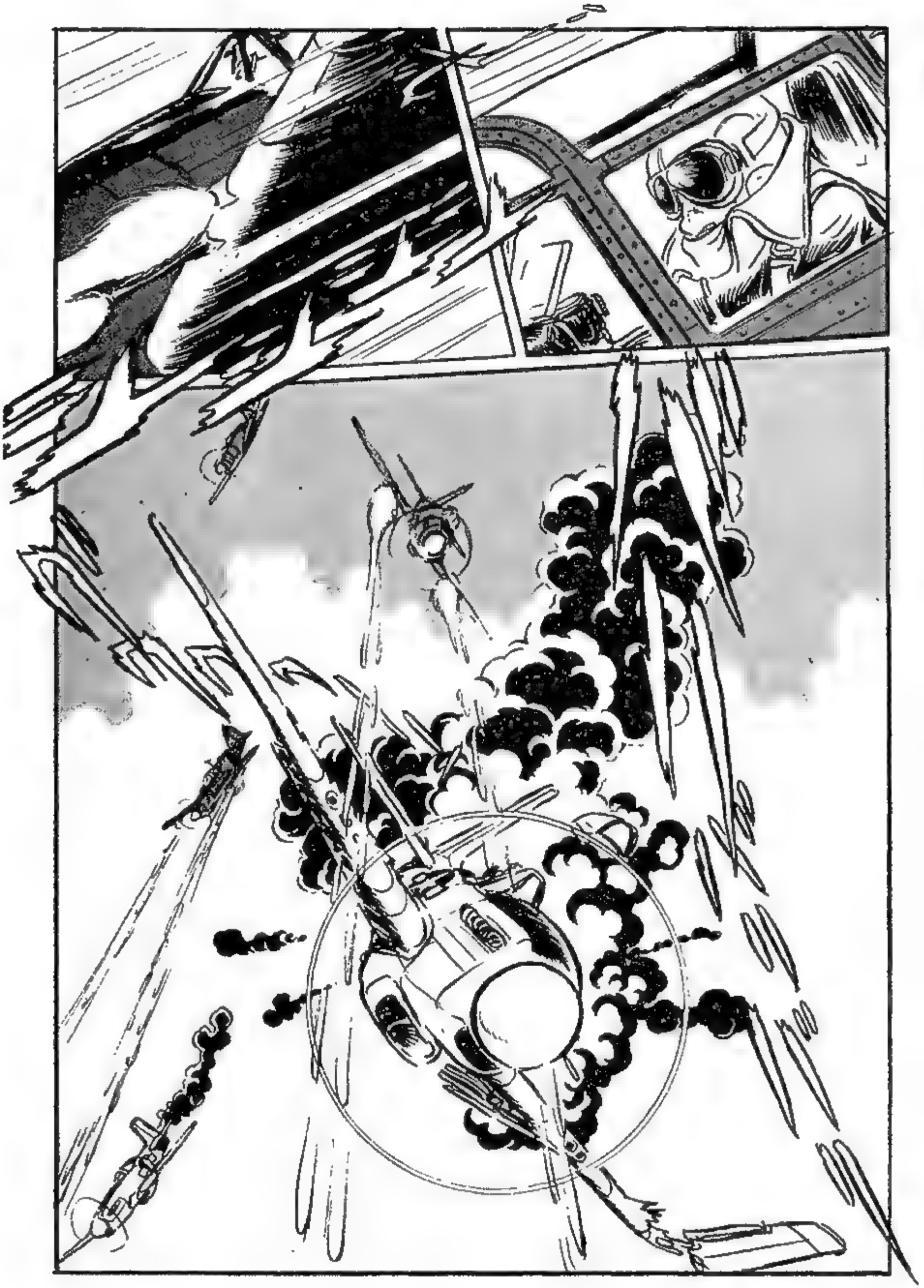

あれだ!!

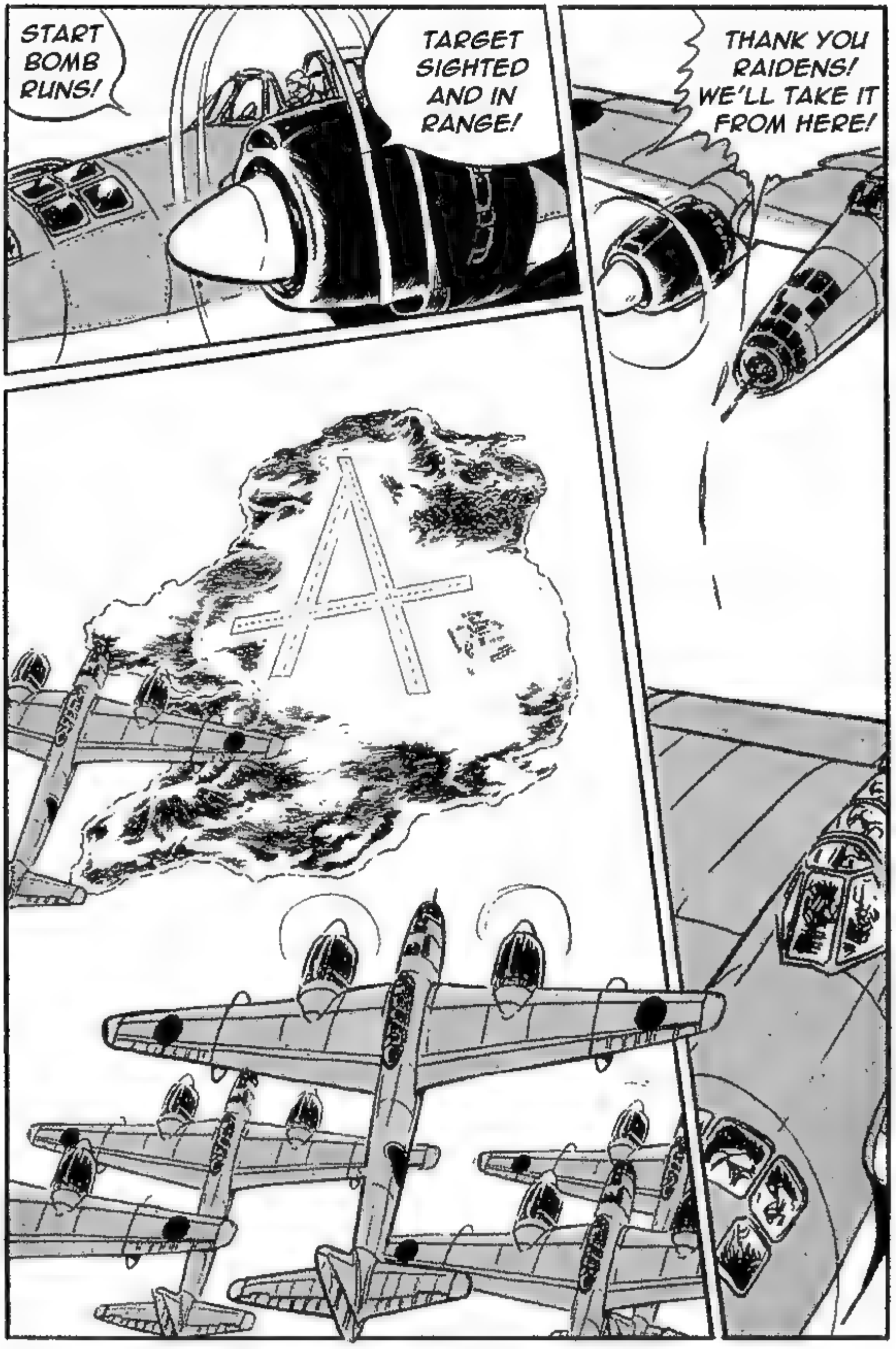
WE HAVE VISUAL! IT'S A FLIGHT OF ABOUT THIRTY BETTYS, NO FIGHTER PROTECTION AT ALL! LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE ON A SUICIDE MISSION FOR US!

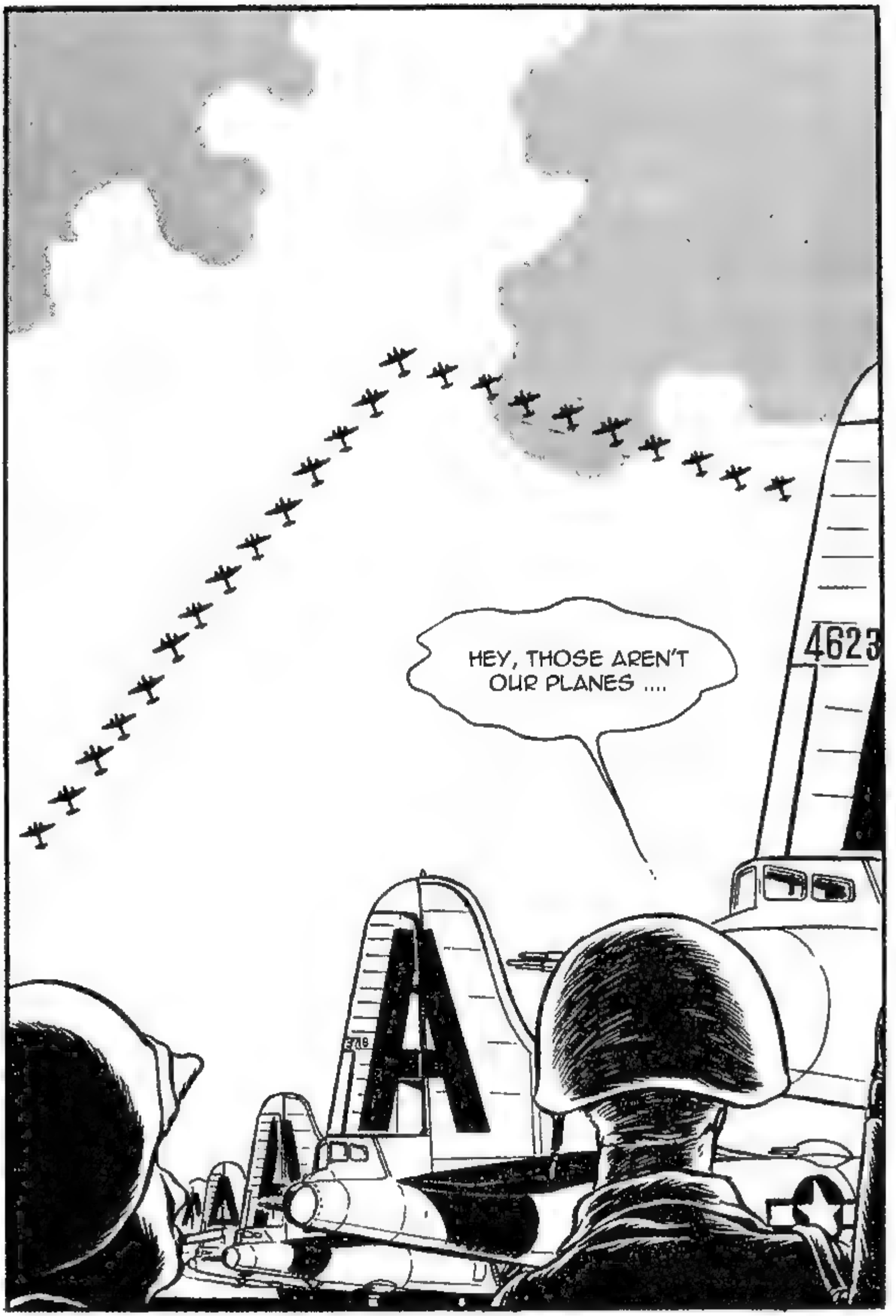
LET'S GO GET 'EM!!

WHAT TH--?!?!

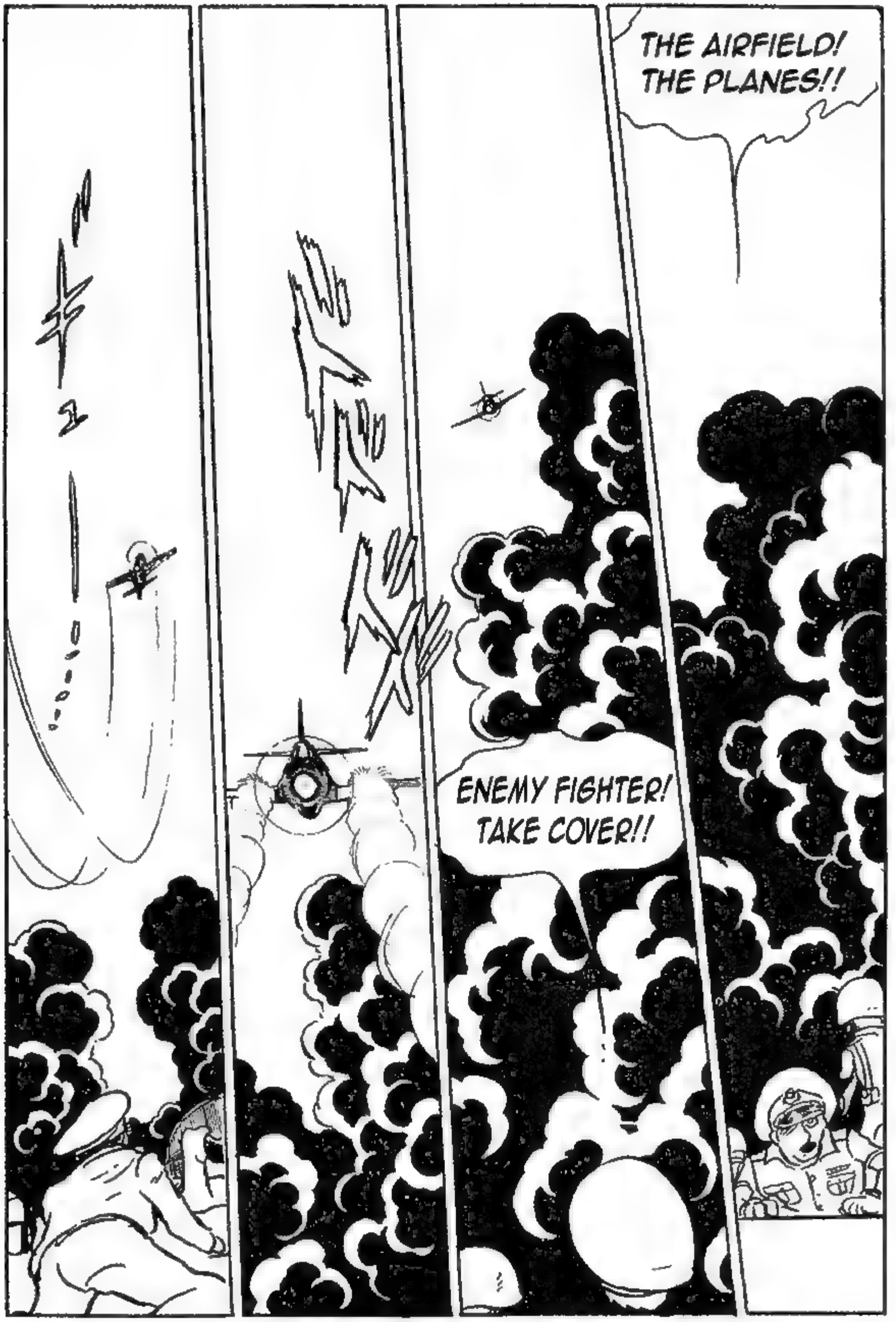

WHAT?!?
SIR! ENEMY FIGHTERS BEHIND US, CLOSING FAST!!!
EVERYONE BREAK AND TURN! WE'VE GOT JAP FIGHTERS TO OUR REAR! REPEAT, FIGHTERS TO OUR REAR!!

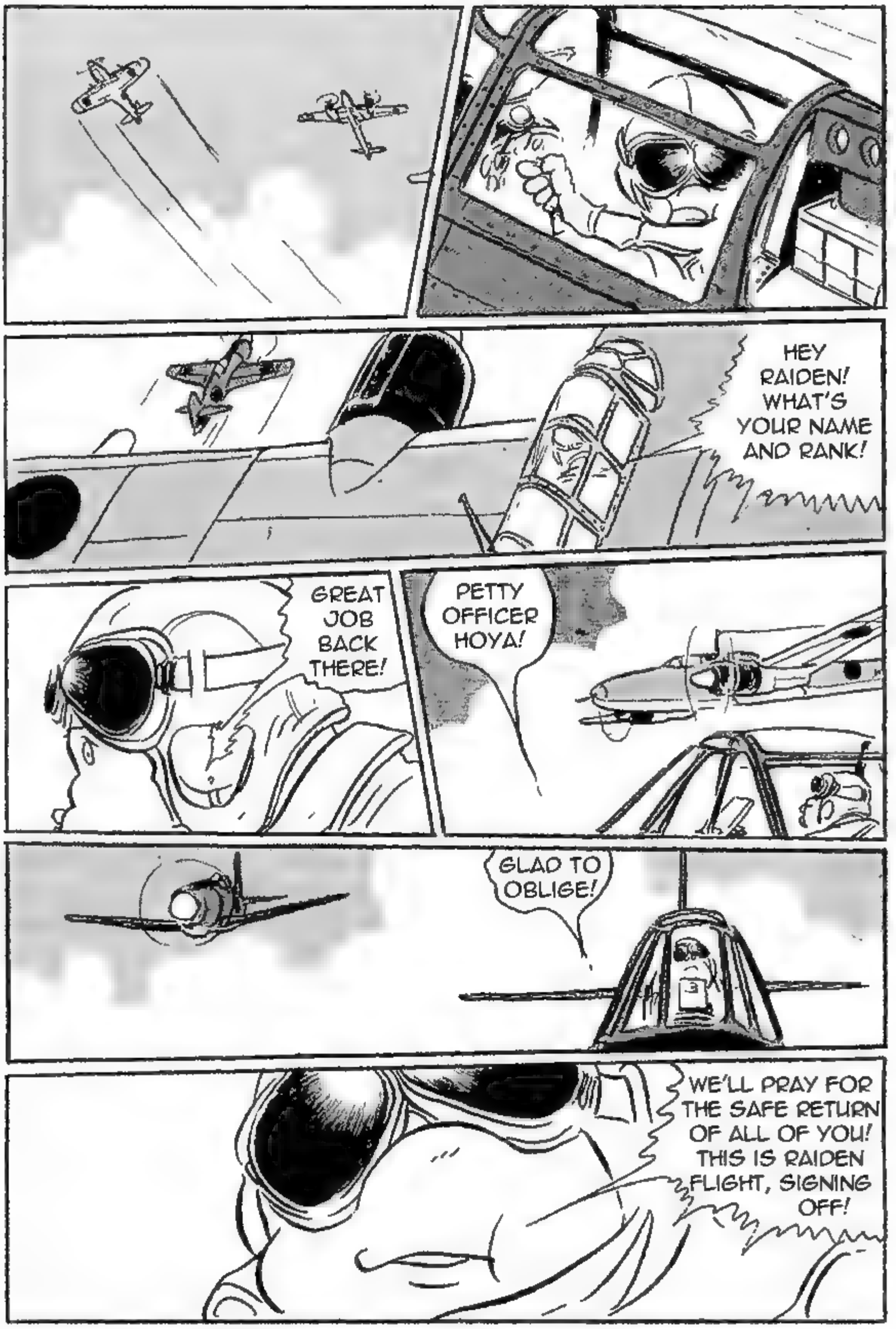



START BOMB RUNS!
TARGET SIGHTED AND IN RANGE!
THANK YOU RAIDENS! WE'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE!

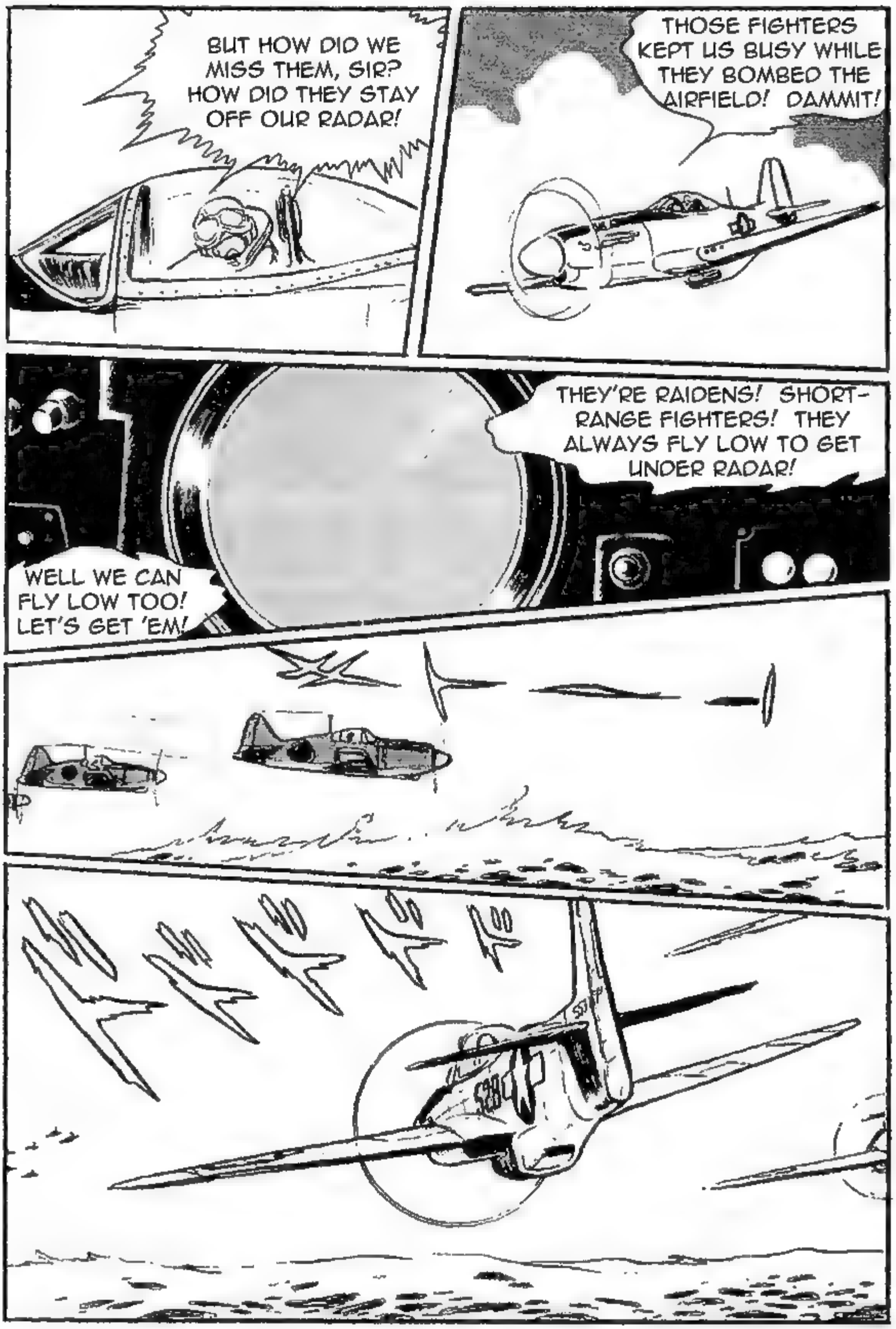

HEY, THOSE AREN'T OUR PLANES ....
4623

チュルチュル


THE AIRFIELD! THE PLANES!!
ENEMY FIGHTER! TAKE COVER!!


HEY RAIDEN! WHAT'S YOUR NAME AND RANK!
GREAT JOB BACK THERE!
PETTY OFFICER HOYA!
GLAD TO OBLIGE!
WE'LL PRAY FOR THE SAFE RETURN OF ALL OF YOU! THIS IS RAIDEN FLIGHT, SIGNING OFF!

THEY CAME FROM NOWHERE AND THEY'RE GOING BACK TO NOWHERE, LIKE GHOSTS.
THERE THEY GO, BACK TO FROM WHEREVER THEY CAME.
OKAY, PEOPLE. WE'RE DONE HERE. LET'S GO HOME.
JUST REMEMBER THOSE "GHOSTS" ARE WHY ALL OF US ARE STILL ALIVE.


BUT HOW DID WE MISS THEM, SIR? HOW DID THEY STAY OFF OUR RADAR!
THOSE FIGHTERS KEPT US BUSY WHILE THEY BOMBED THE AIRFIELD! DAMMIT!
THEY'RE RAIDENS! SHORT-RANGE FIGHTERS! THEY ALWAYS FLY LOW TO GET UNDER RADAR!
WELL WE CAN FLY LOW TOO! LET'S GET 'EM!

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO? WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH FUEL LEFT TO FIGHT!

HOYA, THEY'RE FOLLOWING US! THEY'LL FIND OUR SECRET BASE IF THEY DO!

NO SIR! WE'VE TRIED EVERYTHING AND THEY'RE STILL STAYING WITH US!!

... AND YOU SAY YOU CAN'T SHAKE THEM?

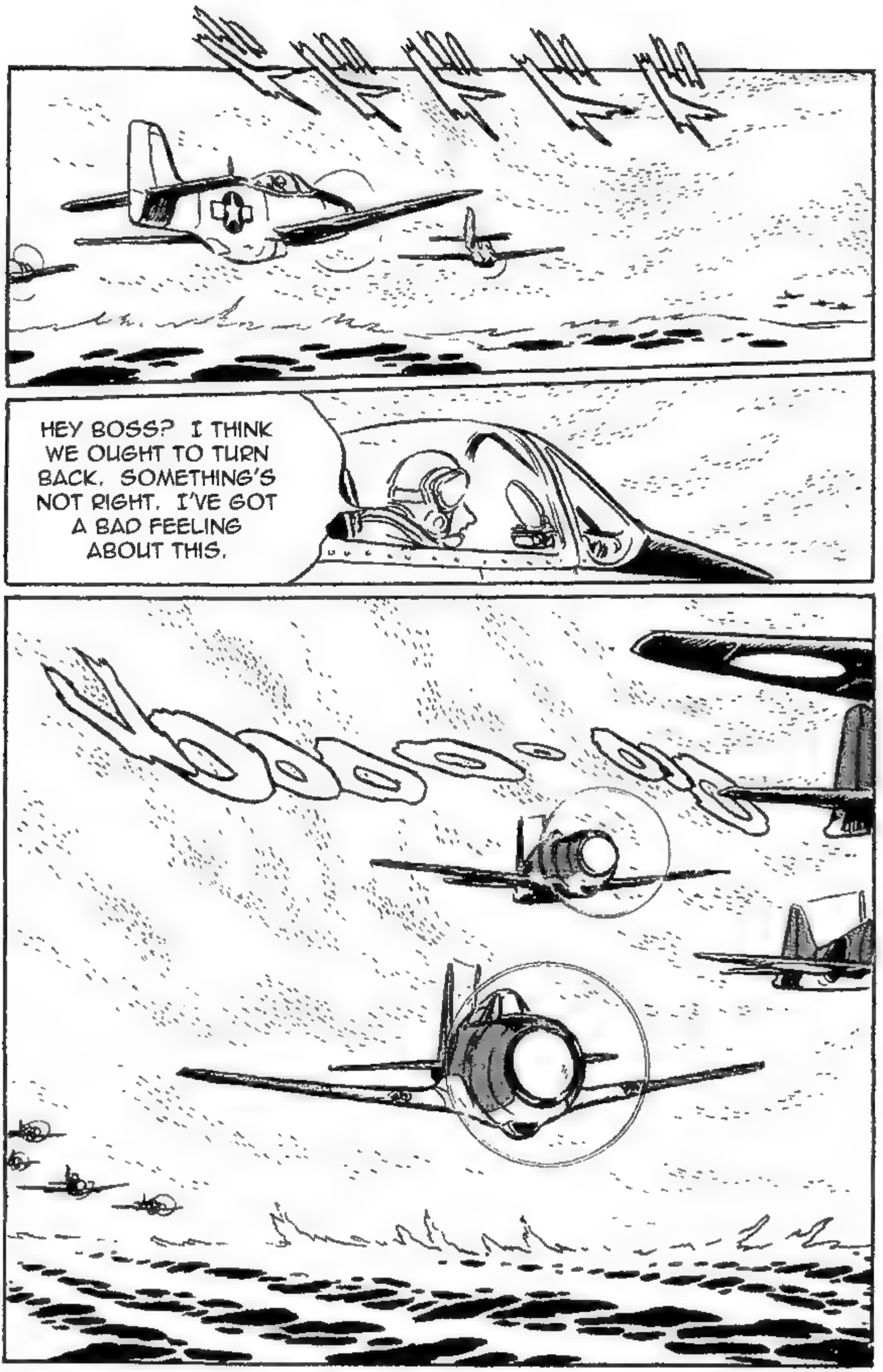
THERE'S ONLY ONE THING WE CAN DO, GUYS.

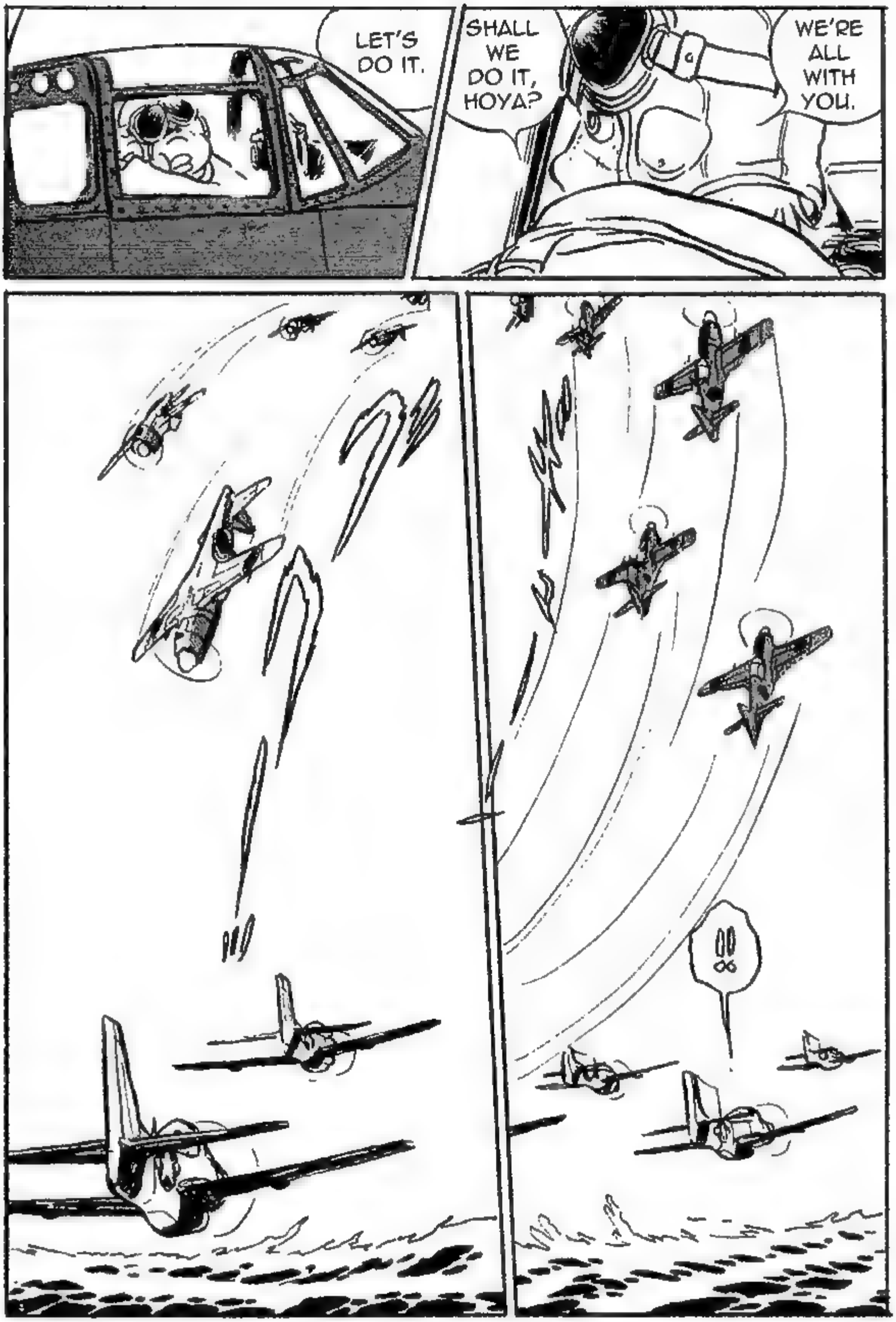
THEY'RE ALSO GAINING. I FIGURE THEY'LL CATCH US RIGHT ABOUT THE TIME WE MAKE IT BACK TO MITSUKICHI

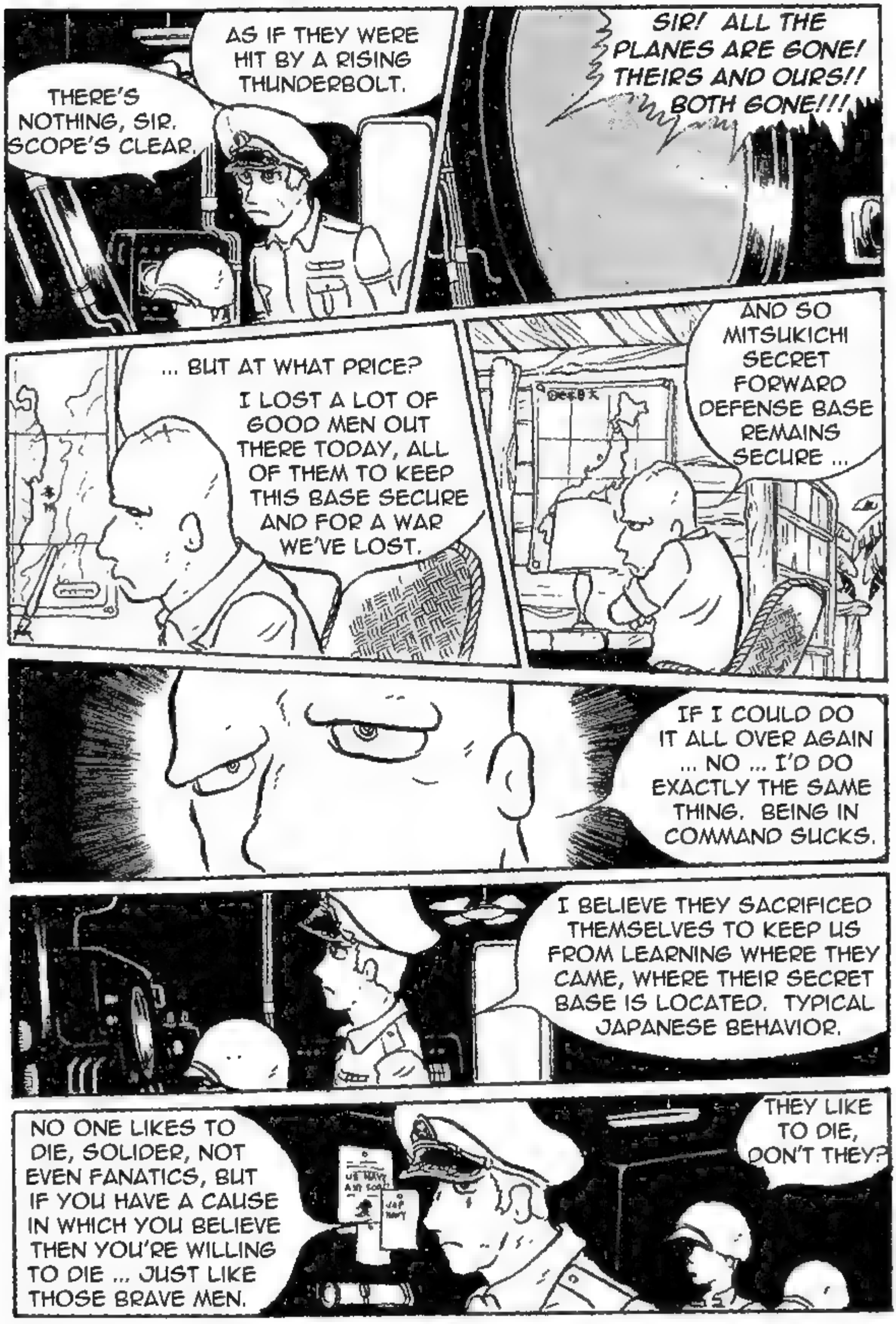
I USED TO DREAM ABOUT IT. LOOKS LIKE I WON'T HAVE TO WAIT.

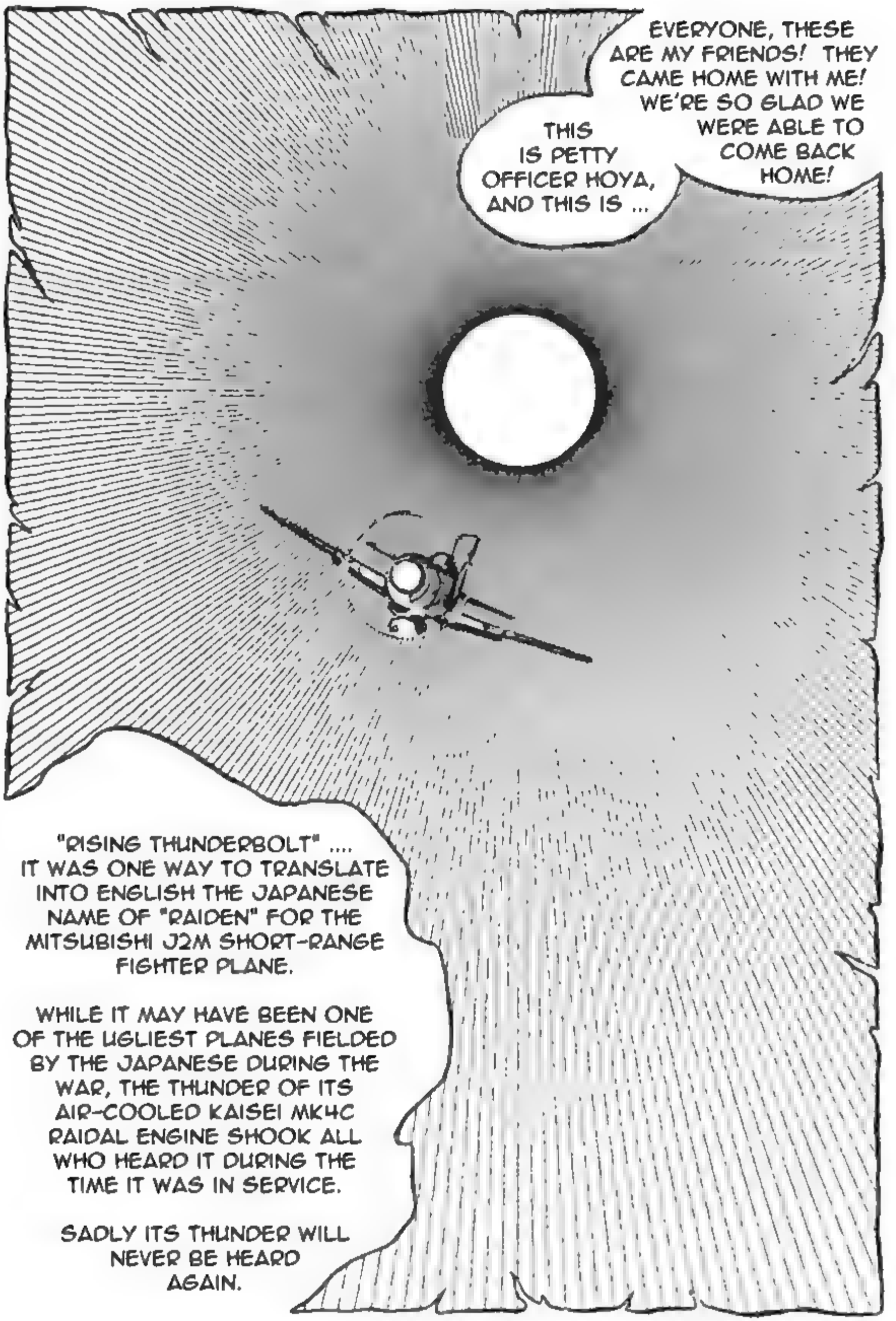
I SO WANTED TO GO HOME WHEN THE WAR WAS OVER.

FOR ONCE I AGREE WITH YOU. THEN I TAKE IT WE'RE ALL AGREED ON THIS?


HEY BOSS? I THINK WE OUGHT TO TURN BACK. SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT. I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS.


LET'S DO IT.
SHALL WE DO IT, HOYA?
WE'RE ALL WITH YOU.


AS IF THEY WERE HIT BY A RISING THUNDERBOLT.
THERE'S NOTHING, SIR. SCOPE'S CLEAR.
SIR! ALL THE PLANES ARE GONE! THEIRS AND OURS!! BOTH GONE!!!
... BUT AT WHAT PRICE?
I LOST A LOT OF GOOD MEN OUT THERE TODAY, ALL OF THEM TO KEEP THIS BASE SECURE AND FOR A WAR WE'VE LOST.
AND SO MITSUKICHI SECRET FORWARD DEFENSE BASE REMAINS SECURE ...
IF I COULD DO IT ALL OVER AGAIN ... NO ... I'D DO EXACTLY THE SAME THING. BEING IN COMMAND SUCKS.
I BELIEVE THEY SACRIFICED THEMSELVES TO KEEP US FROM LEARNING WHERE THEY CAME, WHERE THEIR SECRET BASE IS LOCATED. TYPICAL JAPANESE BEHAVIOR.
NO ONE LIKES TO DIE, SOLIDER, NOT EVEN FANATICS, BUT IF YOU HAVE A CAUSE IN WHICH YOU BELIEVE THEN YOU'RE WILLING TO DIE ... JUST LIKE THOSE BRAVE MEN.
THEY LIKE TO DIE, DON'T THEY?



(Published in Big Comic Original, March 5, 1977 issue)

MANDELISMS

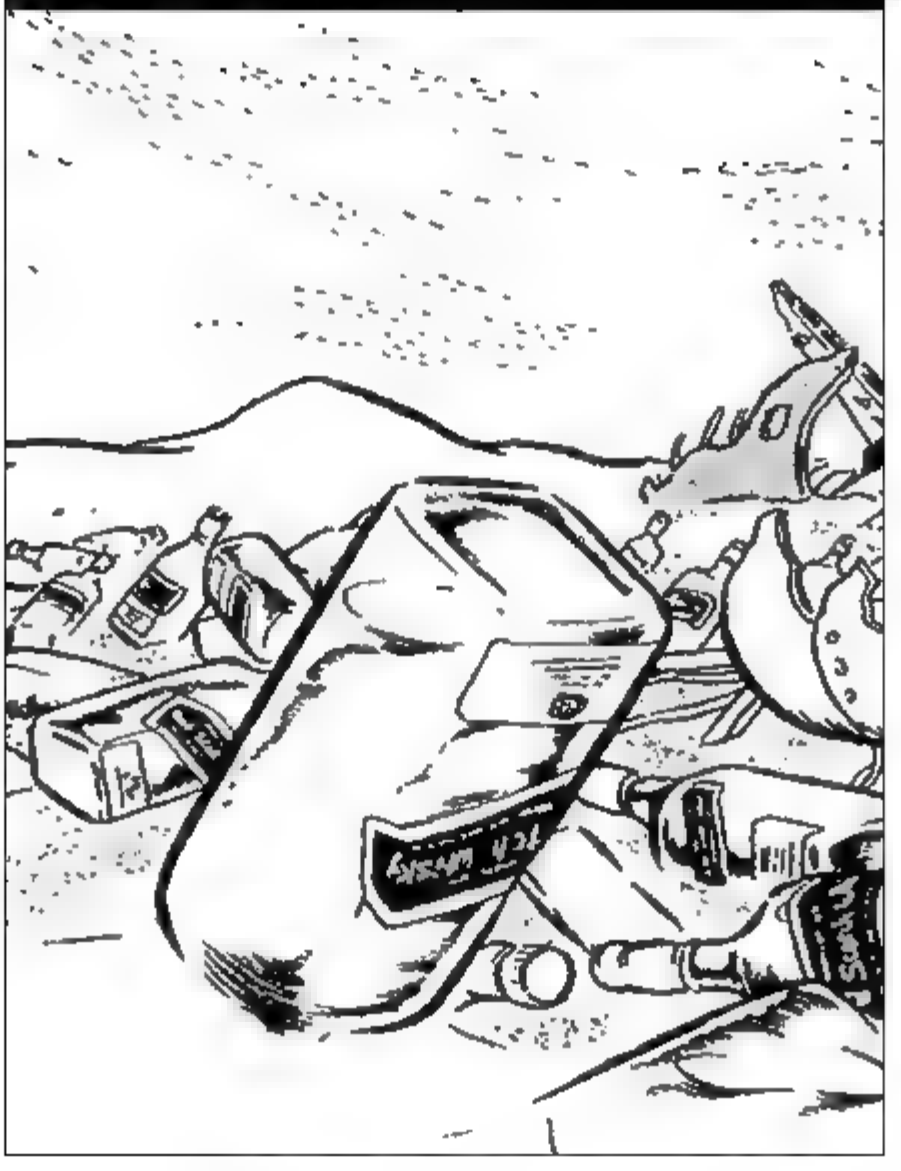
"Rising Thunderbolt," the tale that opens this volume of *The Cockpit*, weaves two different themes within its narrative structure Both are themes we've seen before in earlier stories One is the idea of highlighting a particular piece of World War II era technology that didn't get enough "time to shine" for whatever reasons during the war -- or in the case of the Mitsubishi J2M Raiden and in Matsumoto's opinion deserved more than it got The other is the "what if" story, which in this case postulates the notion, "What if the Japanese had developed an effective means of dealing with the late war and very destructive B-29 Stratofortress raids on Japan itself by the Americans?" You might remember Matsumoto first dwelling on this subject in depth in Volume 1's "High Altitude Fighter" and touching on it now and again in later stories I know Western armchair historians of the war (smile) are going to be all over this story now that it's finally available in an English version (however bad it may be, *cough*), but let me first say some words in Matsumoto's defense He knew the wartime reality just as much as you do Even better, in fact, because he lived it As a child he watched the B-29s fly over his family farm near Kurume and he got to see with his own eyes the devastation and death caused by those raids Put yourself in his youthful shoes Wouldn't there have been a part of you that desperately wished there had been a way to stop that? He couldn't stop it in reality, of course, but decades later and after he had established himself as a manga artist he could explore that youthful wish in his fiction Hence this story That's one way to look at it and I'm sure there's others Talk among yourselves

Again, and as with many of my earlier efforts in this ongoing series, Google Translate AI would not do the original Japanese text justice I wound up with an initial English translation that was roughly two-thirds pure gibberish and even after I tried every trick I know with its current version to help it do better As before I had to interpolate and even reinvent large sections of dialogue in order to turn what it spat out for me into something comprehensible for my intended English readers Again I apologize, but until a later and hopefully better translation is made at least you have this for now As the Bible says, "I see through a glass darkly ...." ^_^

BTW "Sir Edmund Bart" is a fictional invention of Matsumoto's, although the ideas behind his supposed quote are reasonable enough This is just one of those many storytelling devices that Matsumoto frequently employs in his tales You need look no farther than the original Galaxy Express 999 manga for more examples

TALES FROM THE COCKPIT

SAND AND SCOTCH (PARTS 1 AND 2)

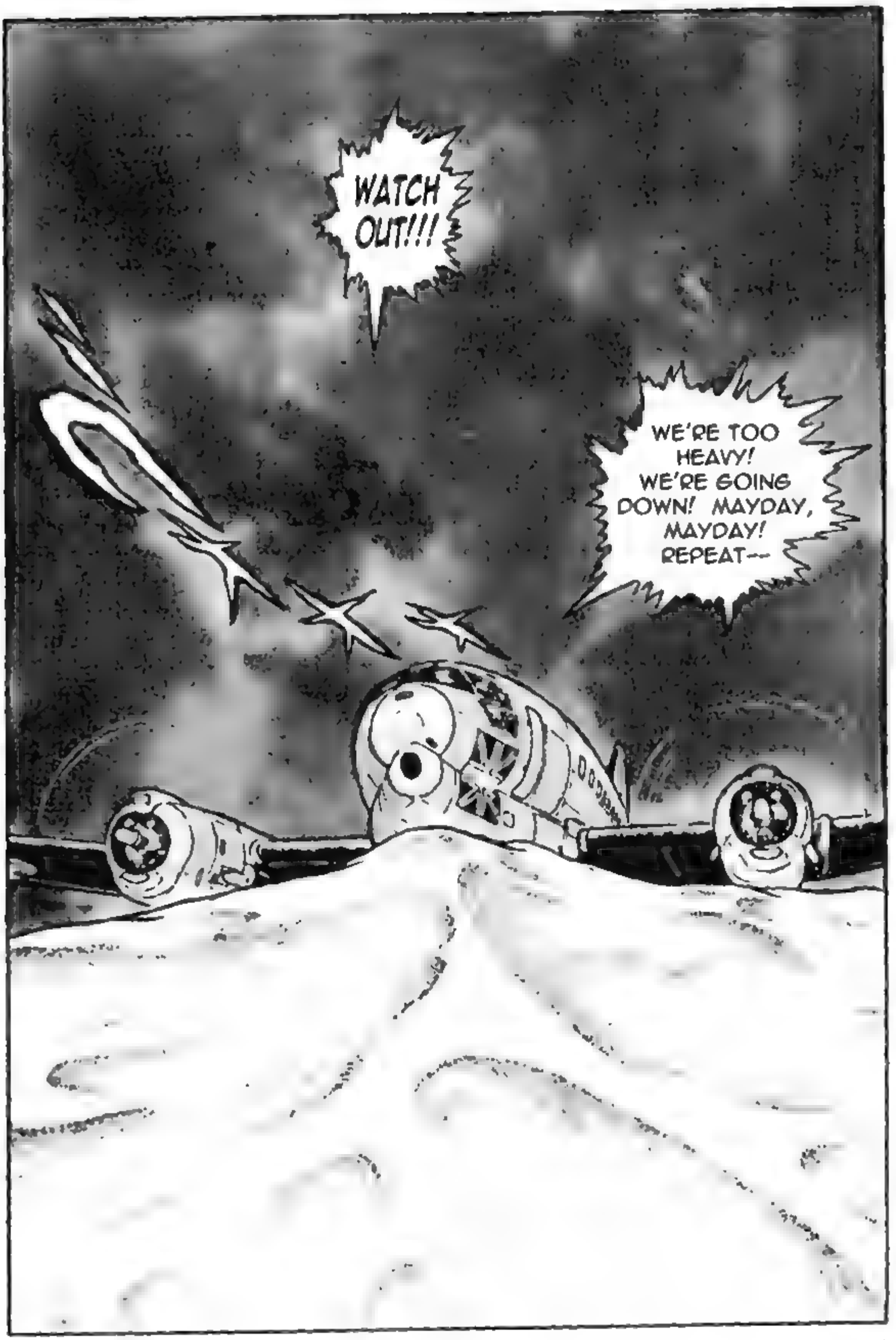


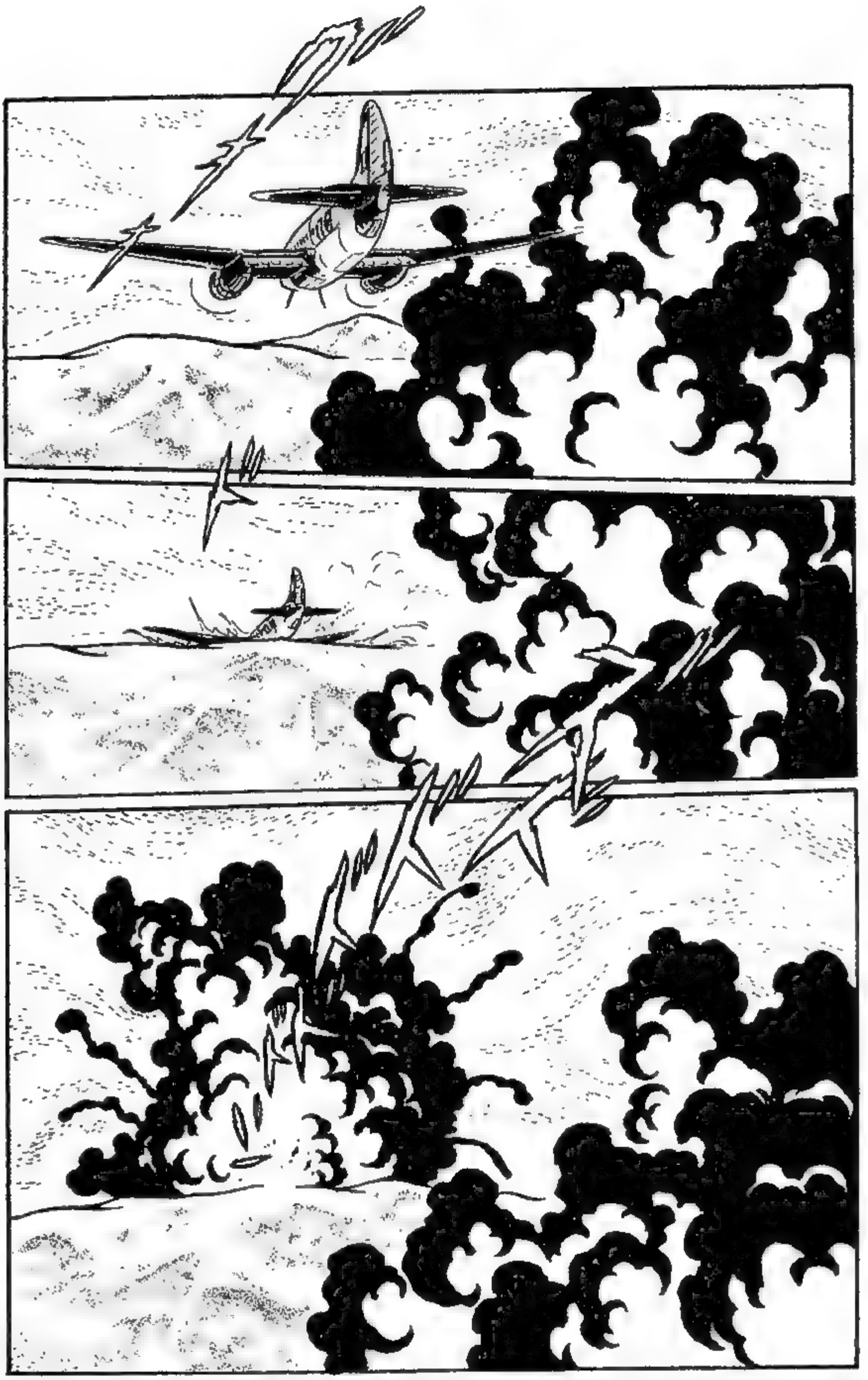
SAND AND SCOTCH (Part 1 of 2)

SAND AND SCOTCH
(PART 1 OF 2)

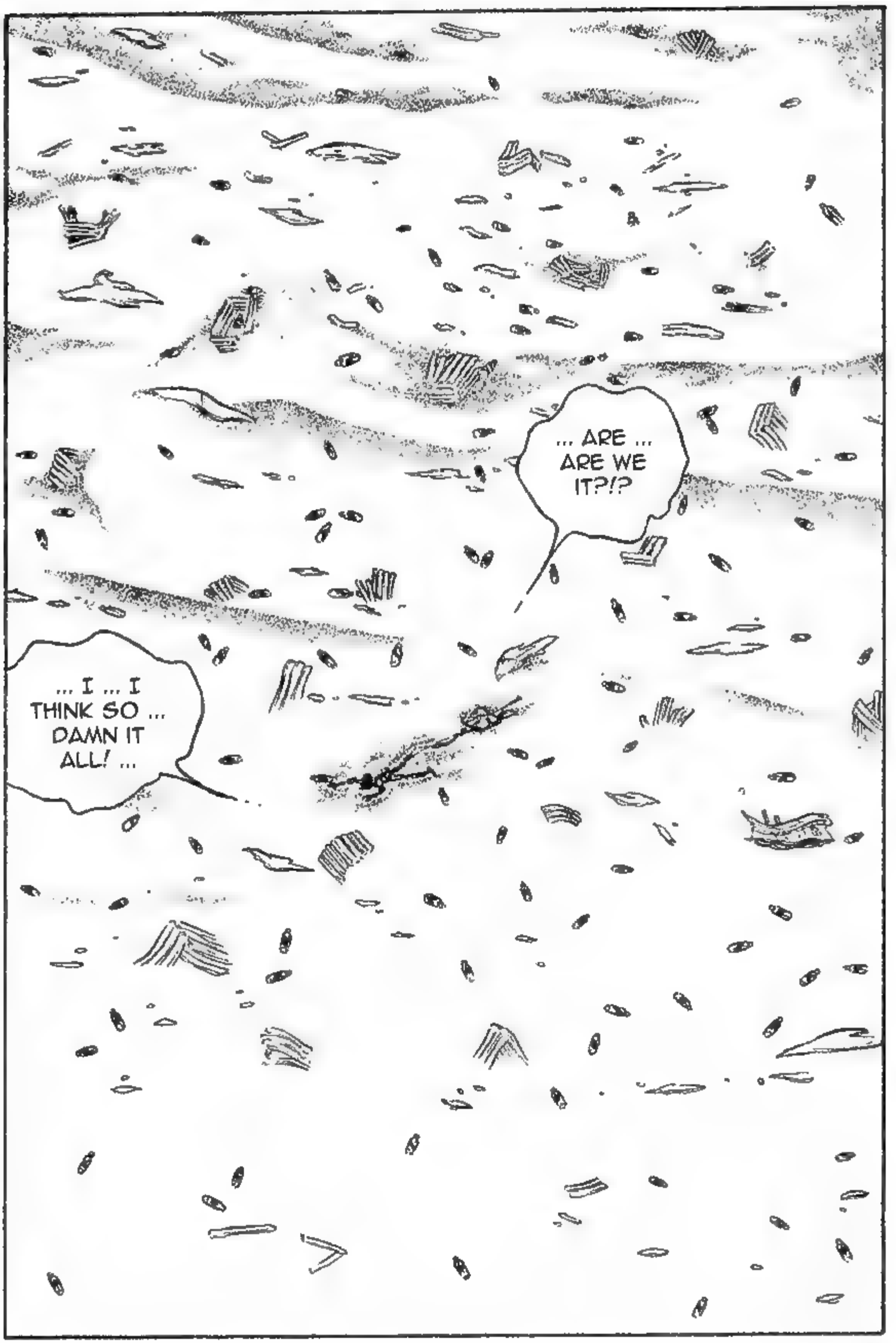
THIS IS WHALE ONE TO WHALE TWO! FLY AS LOW AS YOU CAN! YOU'LL DO BETTER!

THIS IS WHALE TWO! THIS PLANE IS SERIOUSLY OVERLOADED AND SO IS YOURS! WE BARELY HAVE ROOM TO STAND UP IN ALL THIS SHIT!

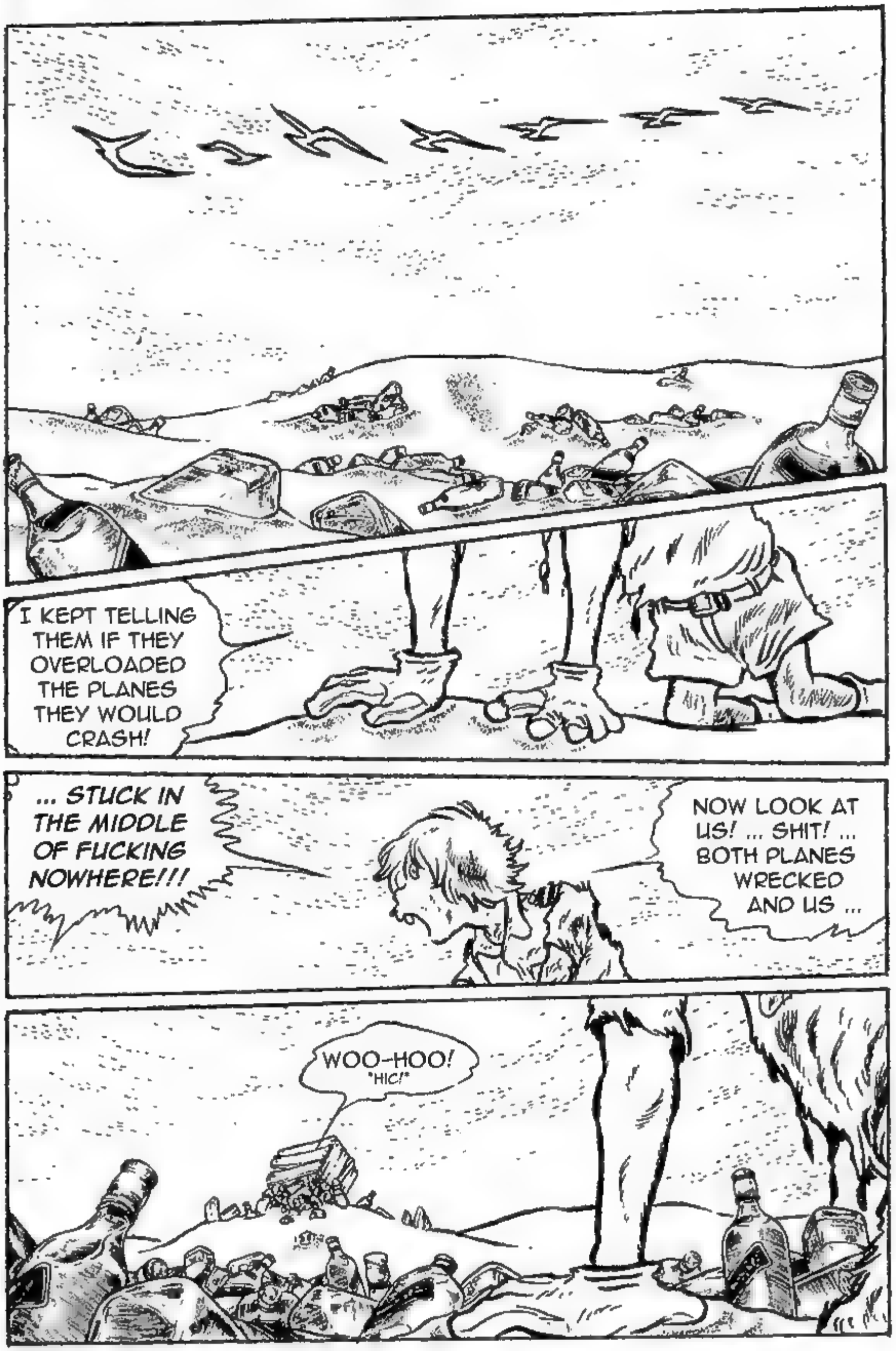

WATCH OUT!!!
WE'RE TOO HEAVY! WE'RE GOING DOWN! MAYDAY, MAYDAY! REPEAT--

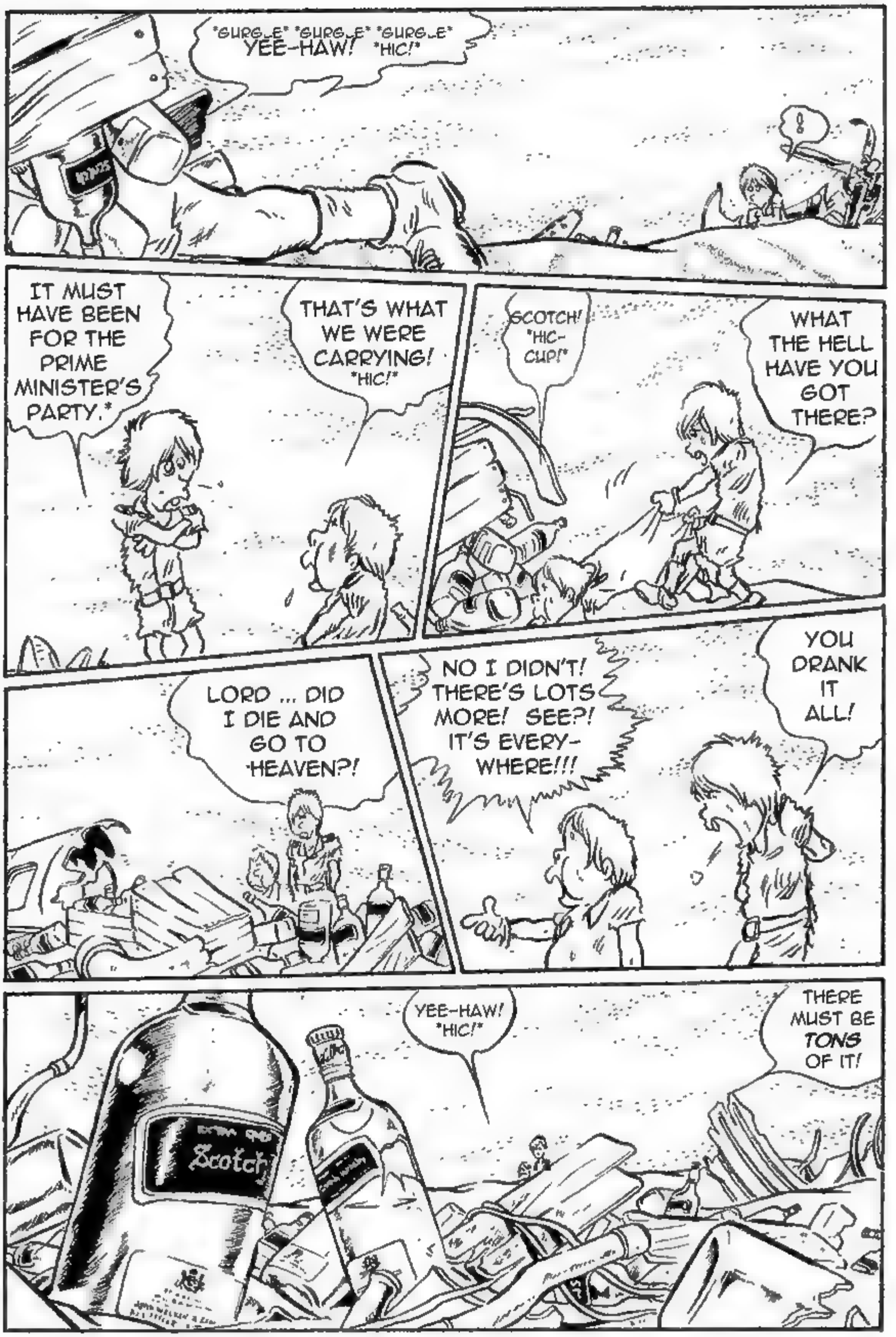


SAND AND SCOTCH (Part 1 of 2)


... ARE ... ARE WE IT?!?
... I ... I THINK SO ... DAMN IT ALL! ...

SAND AND SCOTCH (Part 1 of 2)





(*) AS IN "PRIME MINISTER'S ENTOURAGE." THE ORIGINAL JAPANESE TEXT SEEMS TO IMPLY THE DOUBLE SHIPMENT OF SCOTCH WAS INTENDED FOR SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL'S APPEARANCE AT THE CASABLANCA CONFERENCE, 11-12 JANUARY 1943. JOHNNIE WALKER SCOTCH WHISKEY WAS ONE OF HIS FAVORITE LIQUORS.

SAND AND SCOTCH (Part 1 of 2)

WELL ALL I CAN SAY THERE IS, "WHAT A WAY TO GO!"

BECAUSE ALCOHOL DRIES YOU OUT, THAT'S WHY!!

WHY NOT?

YOU FOOL! YOU CAN'T DRINK THIS GIVEN HOW HOT IT IS!!

YEAH. LOOK AT IT BURN. IT MUST HAVE BEEN LOADED WITH VINTAGE SCOTCH TOO, YOU THINK?

THAT MUST BE THE OTHER PLANE. DAMN.

GERMANS. DON'T FORGET THEM.

... BUT THE ITALIANS ARE CLOSER.

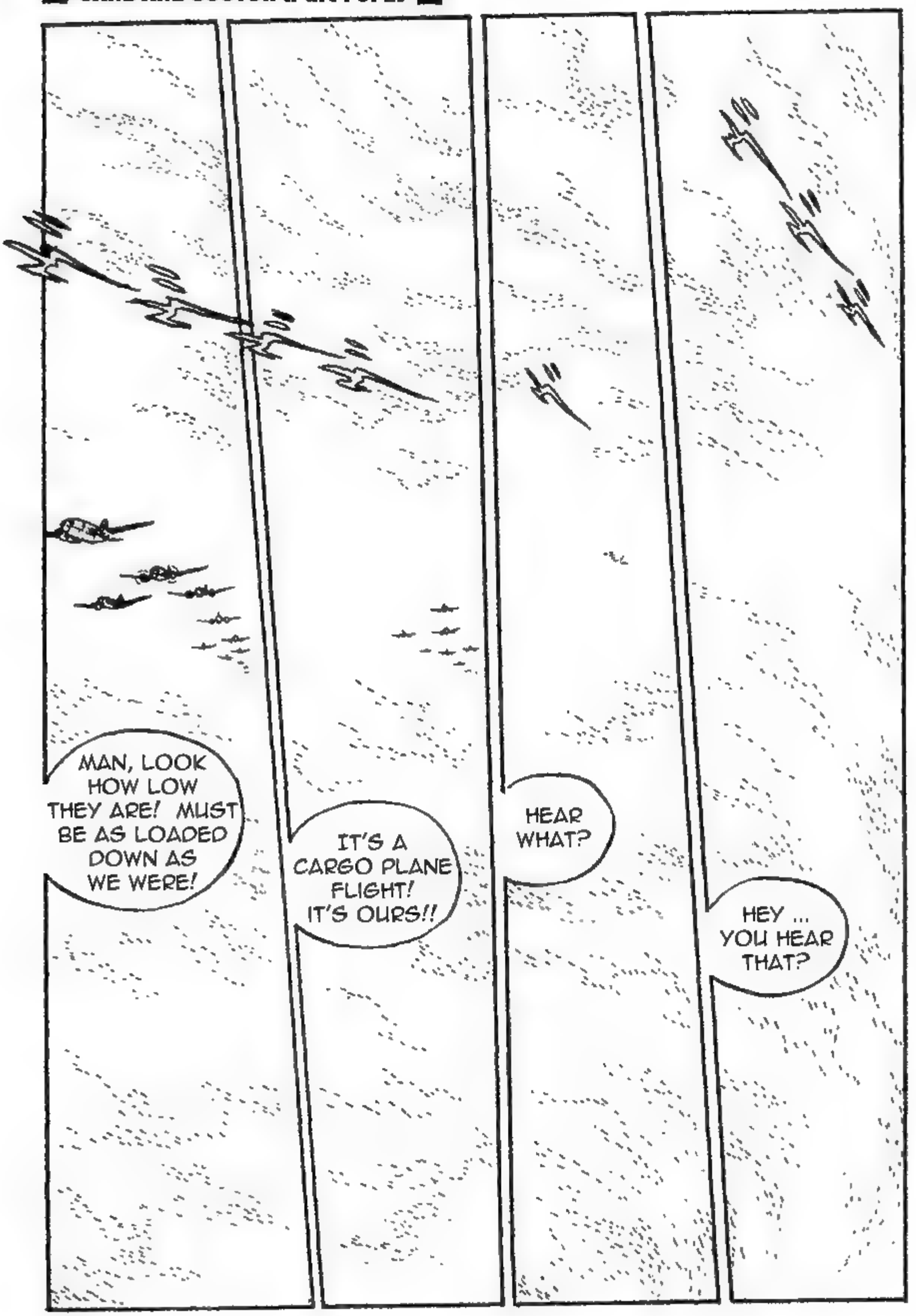
WELL, WHAT NOW? TOBRUK IS THAT WAY ...

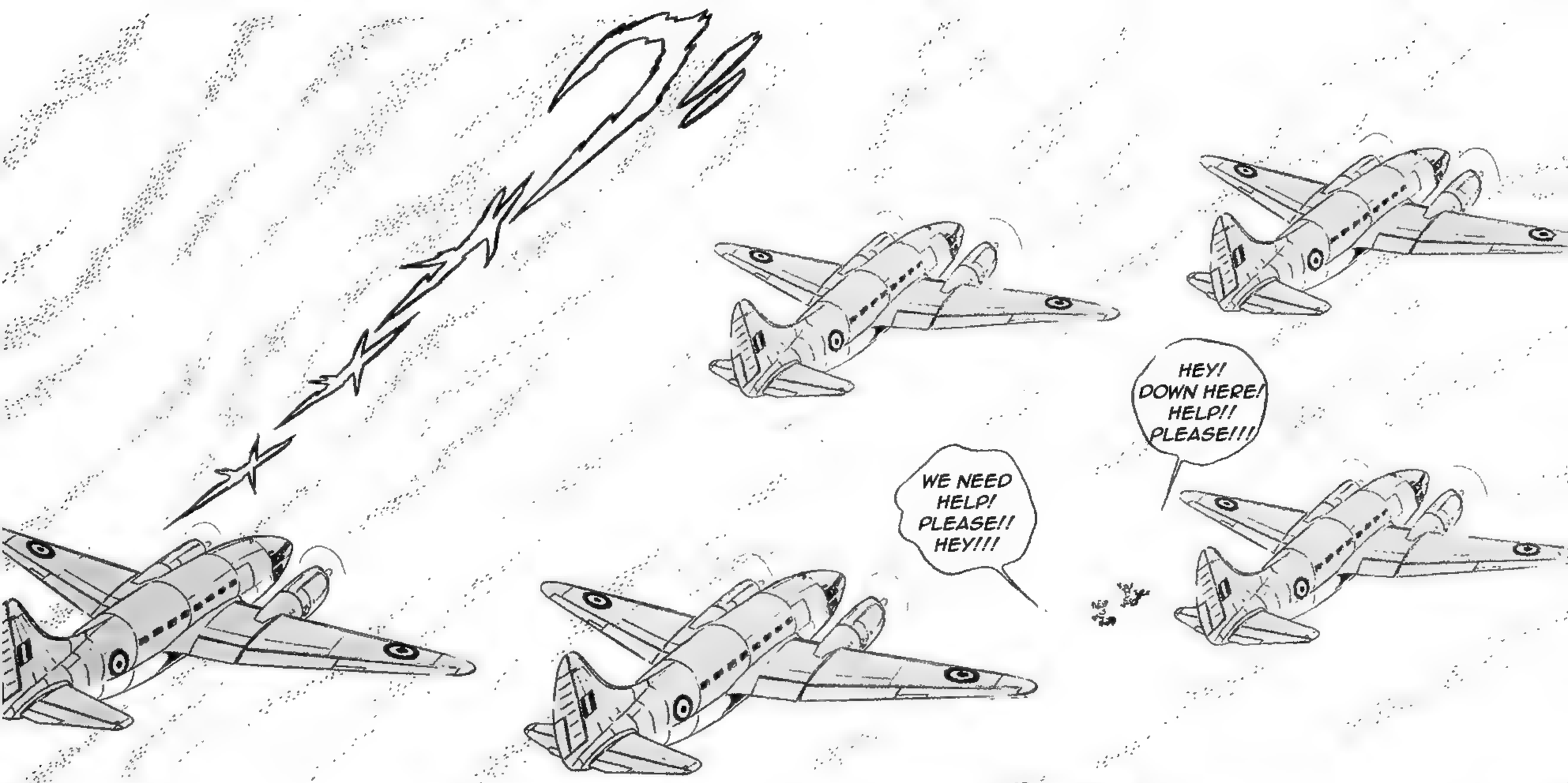
... AND WE CAN'T DRINK A DROP.* DAMN.

SCOTCH, SCOTCH EVERY-WHERE ...

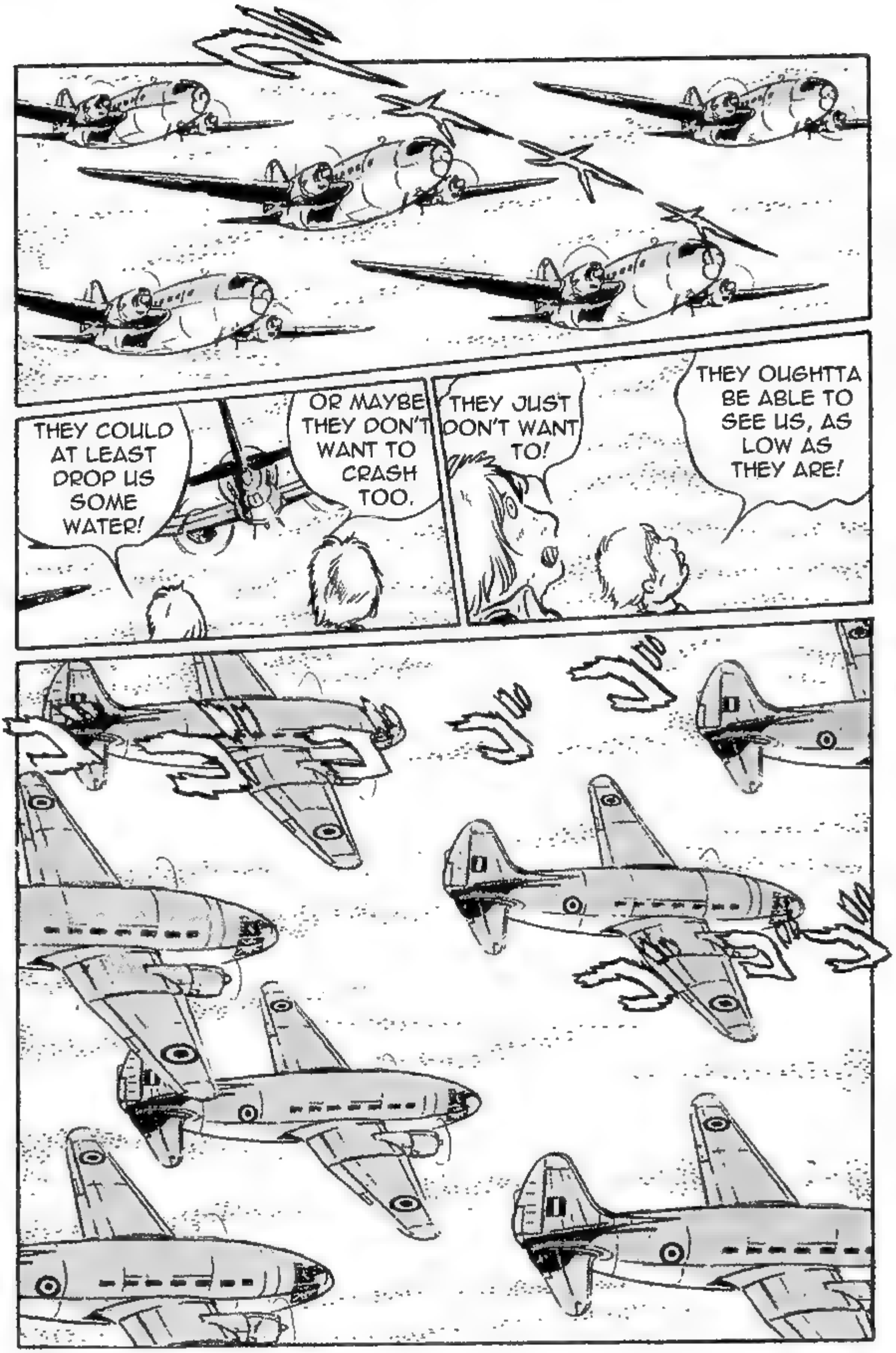
(*) THIS IS A WORDPLAY OF MINE ON A FAMOUS LINE FROM THE POEM "THE RHYME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER" BY SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE. YOU MIGHT REMEMBER IT: "WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE / NOT A DROP TO DRINK." (R.M.)

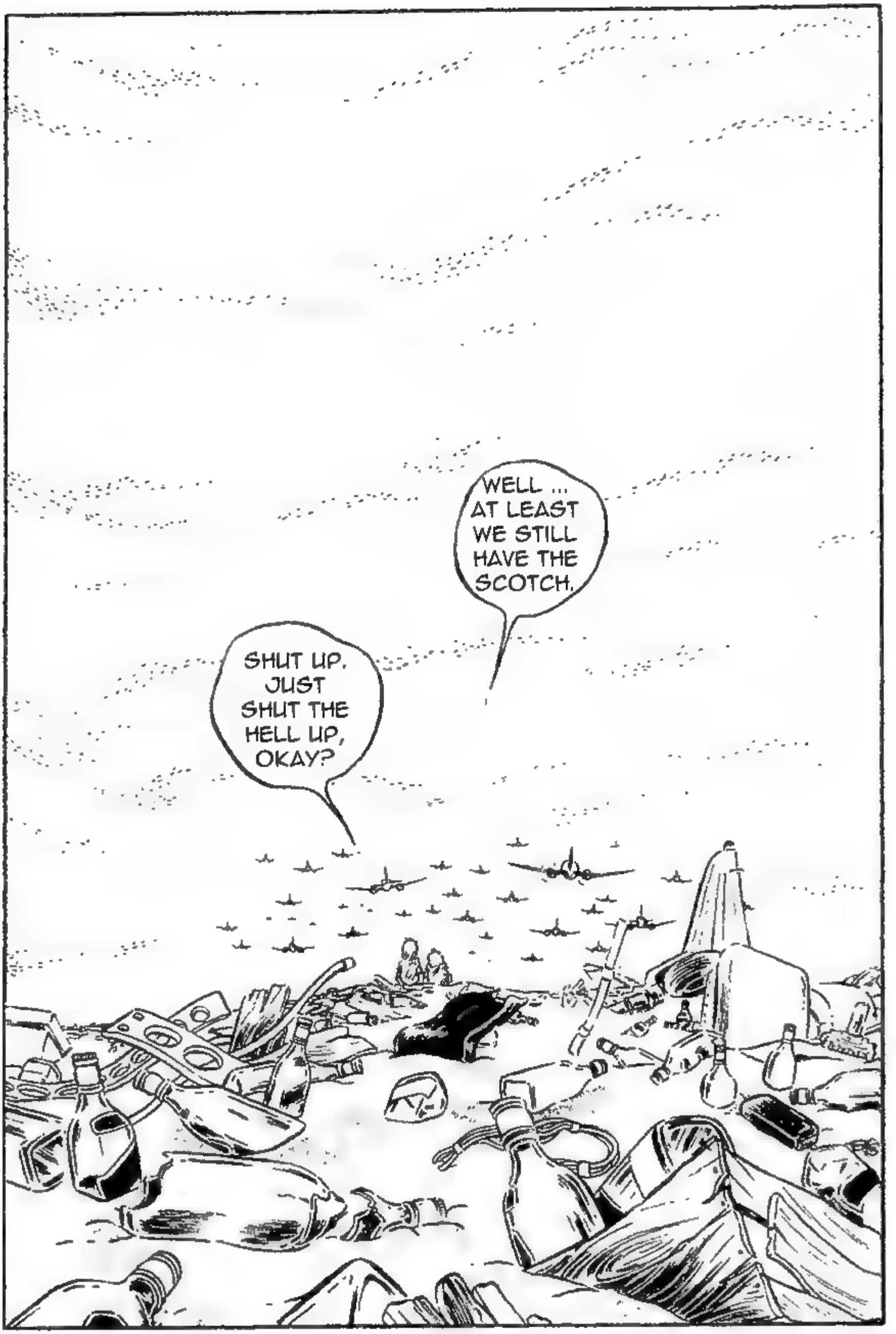
SAND AND SCOTCH (Part 1 of 2)



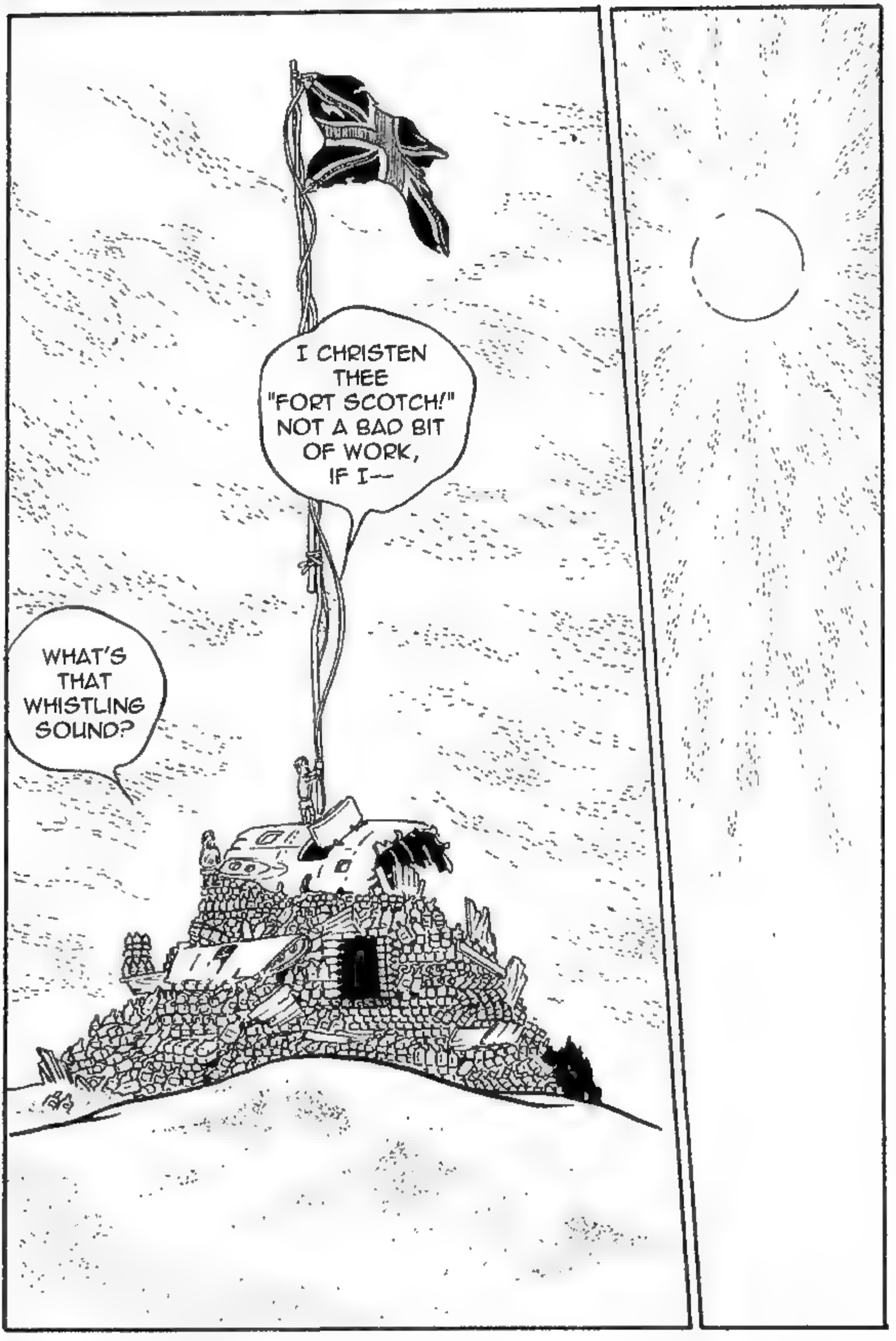

HEY!
DOWN HERE!
HELP!!
PLEASE!!!
WE NEED
HELP!
PLEASE!!
HEY!!!

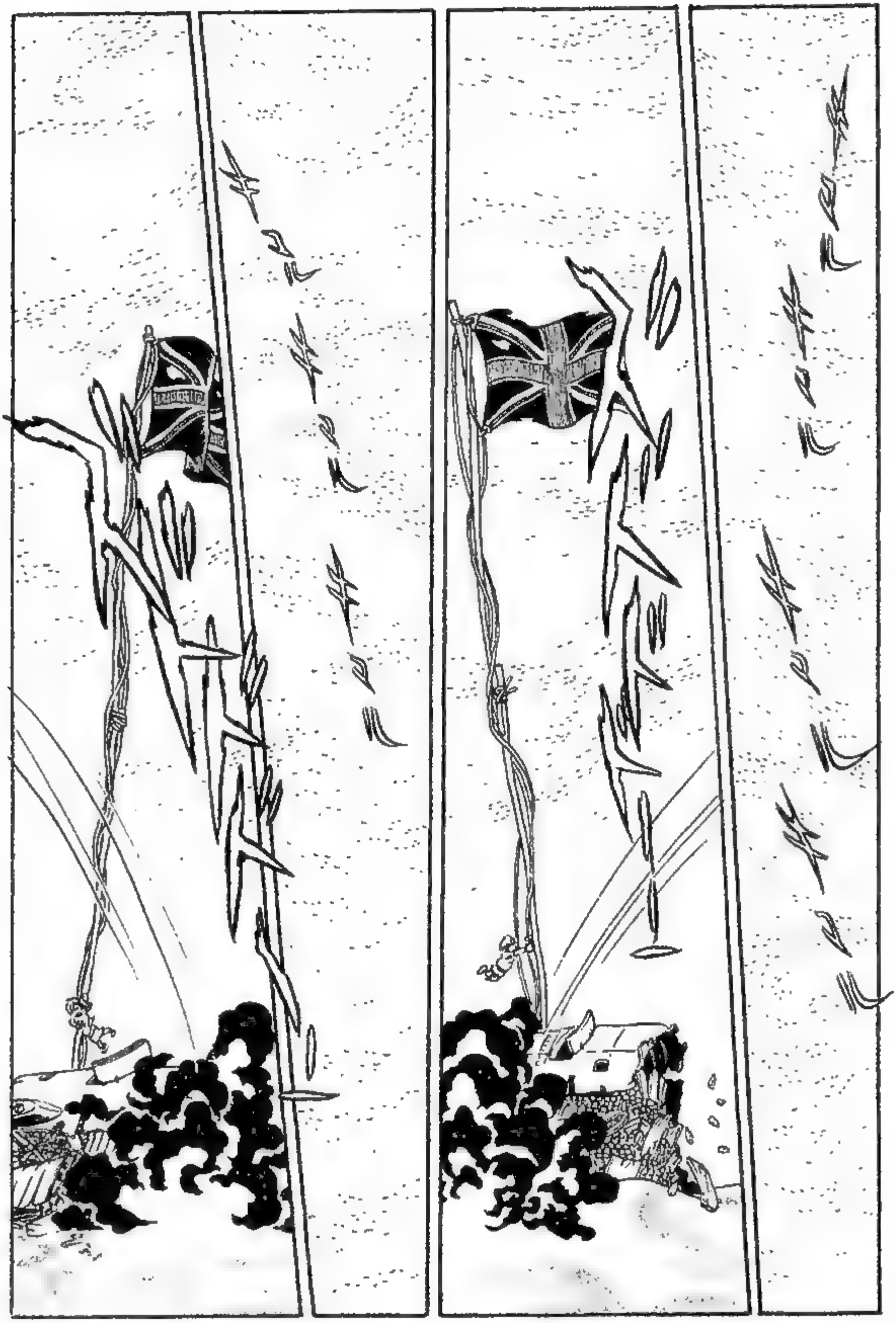
C'MON! GIVE US A HAND! WE NEED HELP!!
CAN'T YOU SEE THE PLANE WRECKS?!?!


THEY COULD AT LEAST DROP US SOME WATER!
OR MAYBE THEY DON'T WANT TO CRASH TOO.
THEY JUST DON'T WANT TO!
THEY OUGHTTA BE ABLE TO SEE US, AS LOW AS THEY ARE!

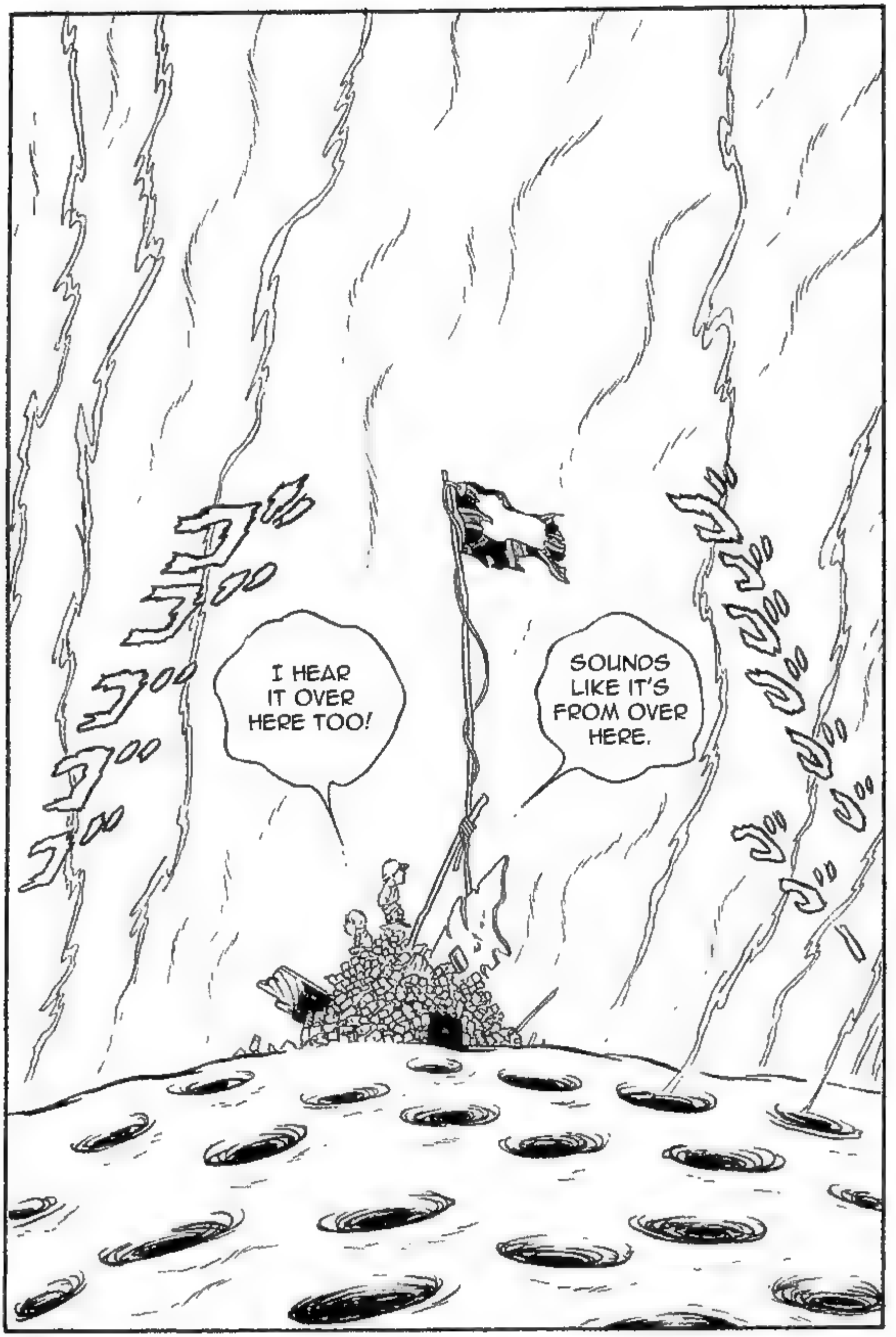

WELL ... AT LEAST WE STILL HAVE THE SCOTCH.
SHUT UP. JUST SHUT THE HELL UP, OKAY?

SAND AND SCOTCH (Part 1 of 2)

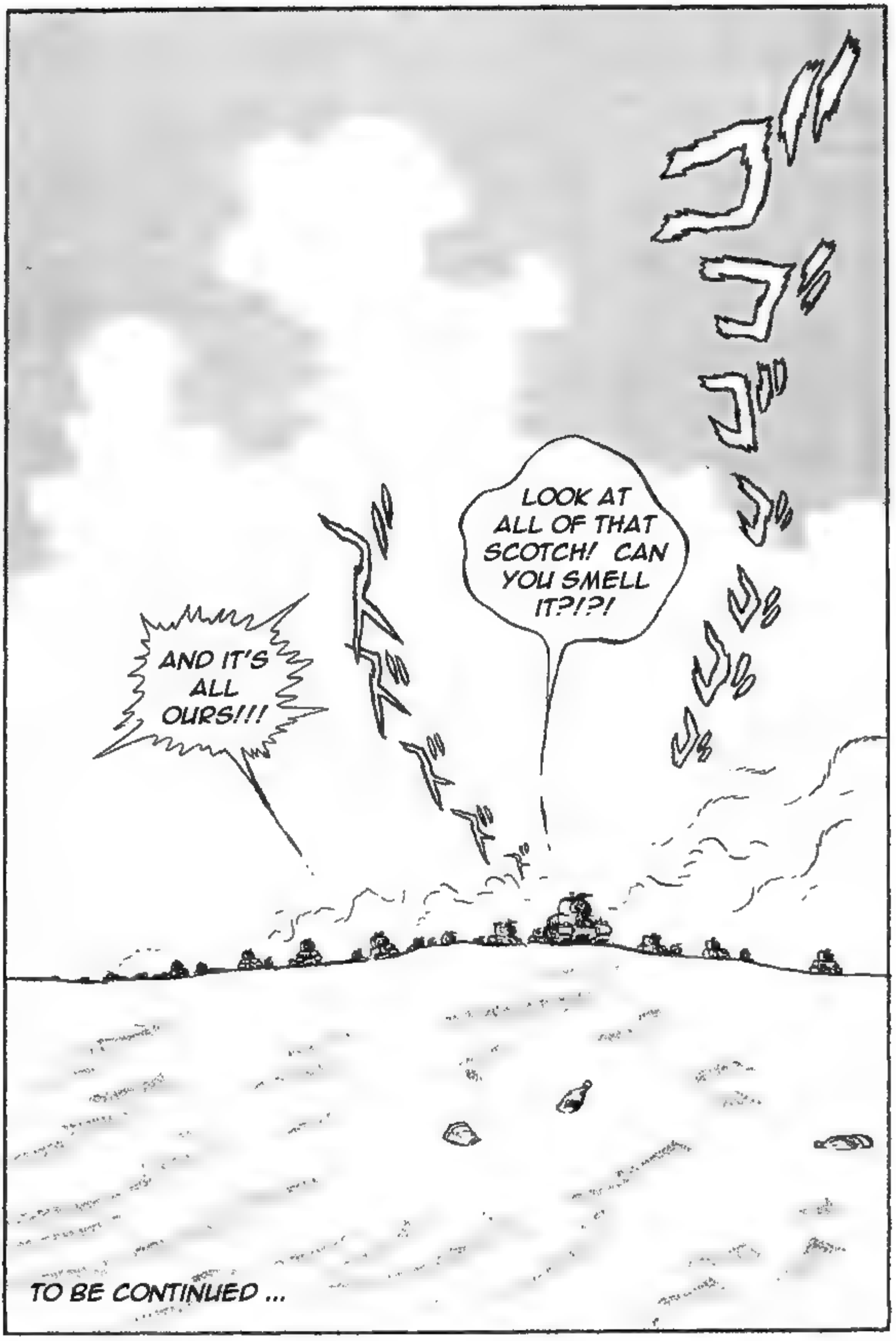




SAND AND SCOTCH (Part 1 of 2)


I HEAR IT OVER HERE TOO!
SOUNDS LIKE IT'S FROM OVER HERE.

SAND AND SCOTCH (Part 1 of 2)



SAND AND SCOTCH
(PART 2 OF 2)

MEIN GOTT! SIEH DIR DAS AN! VERTREIBE DIE BRITEN! SCHNAPP DIR DEN SCHOTTEN!*

(*) "MY GOD! LOOK AT ALL THAT! DRIVE THE BRITISH OFF! CAPTURE THAT SCOTCH!!

... AND IN THIS ONE A MIXED GERMAN-ITALIAN UNIT OF THE AFRIKA KORPS!

IN THIS CORNER WE HAVE A BRITISH ROYAL TANK UNIT ...

YOU KNOW, I'D LAY ODDS ON THE AFRIKA KORPS, BUT I'M NOT FOND OF SPAGHETTI OR SAUERKRAUT.

OH YEAH! SORRY!

C'MON! GIVE ME A HAND! WE'RE BRITISH, REMEMBER?

THIS SCOTCH IS SIR WINSTON'S! WE'VE GOT TO MAKE SURE OUR SIDE WINDS UP WITH IT!

HEY, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

DIDN'T AL CAPONE SAY THAT BEFORE THE WAR?

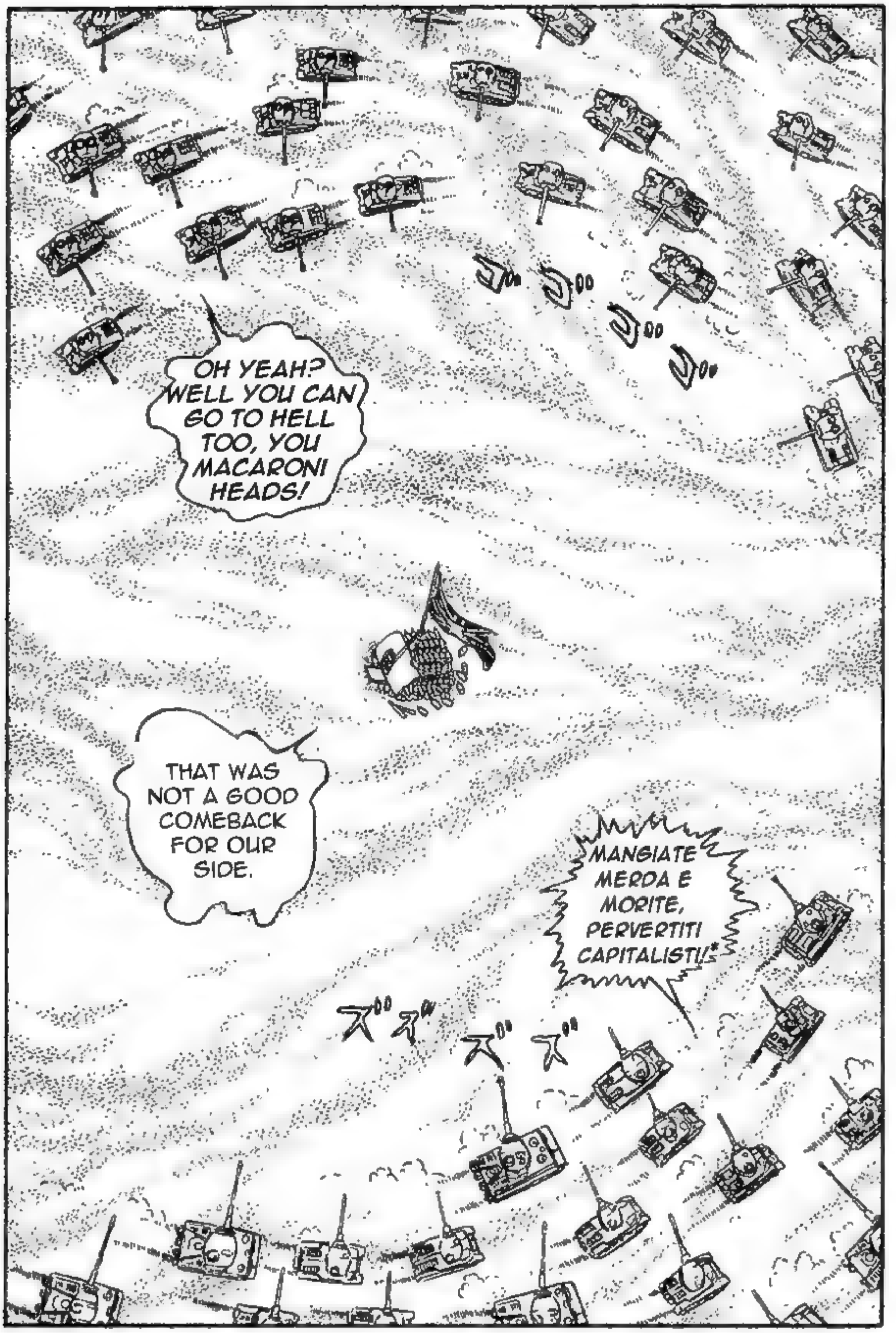
I'VE HEARD ITALIANS WILL FIGHT FOR THREE THINGS: MONEY, LIQUOR, AND WOMEN.

SAND AND SCOTCH (Part 2 of 2)

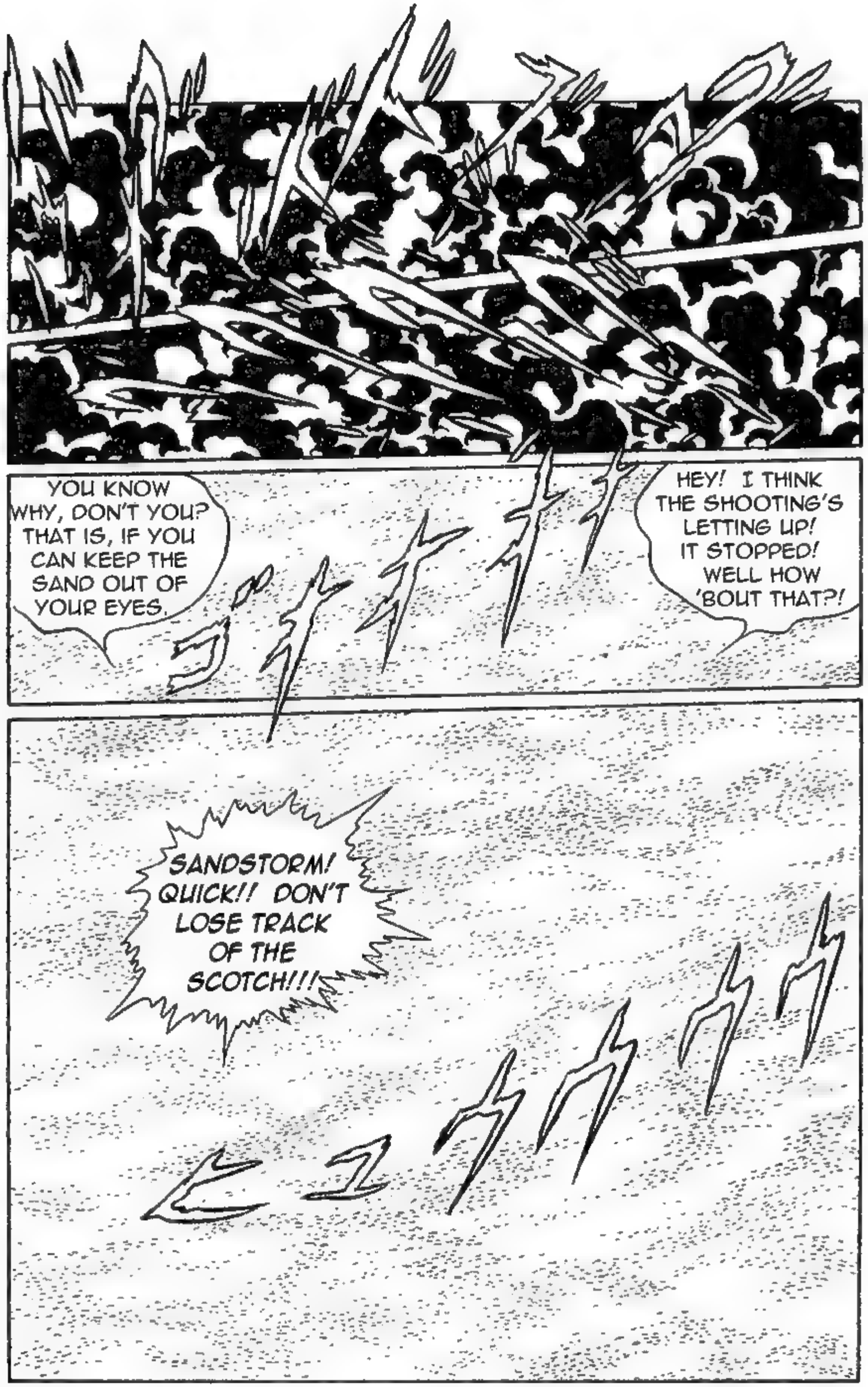
(*) THE SEMOVEMENTE 75/18, ONE OF THE FEW ITALIAN ARMOR UNITS THAT ACTUALLY PERFORMED QUITE WELL UNDER DESERT CONDITIONS. MOST OF THE OTHERS WERE DESIGNED FOR ALPINE TERRAIN AND DID POORLY.

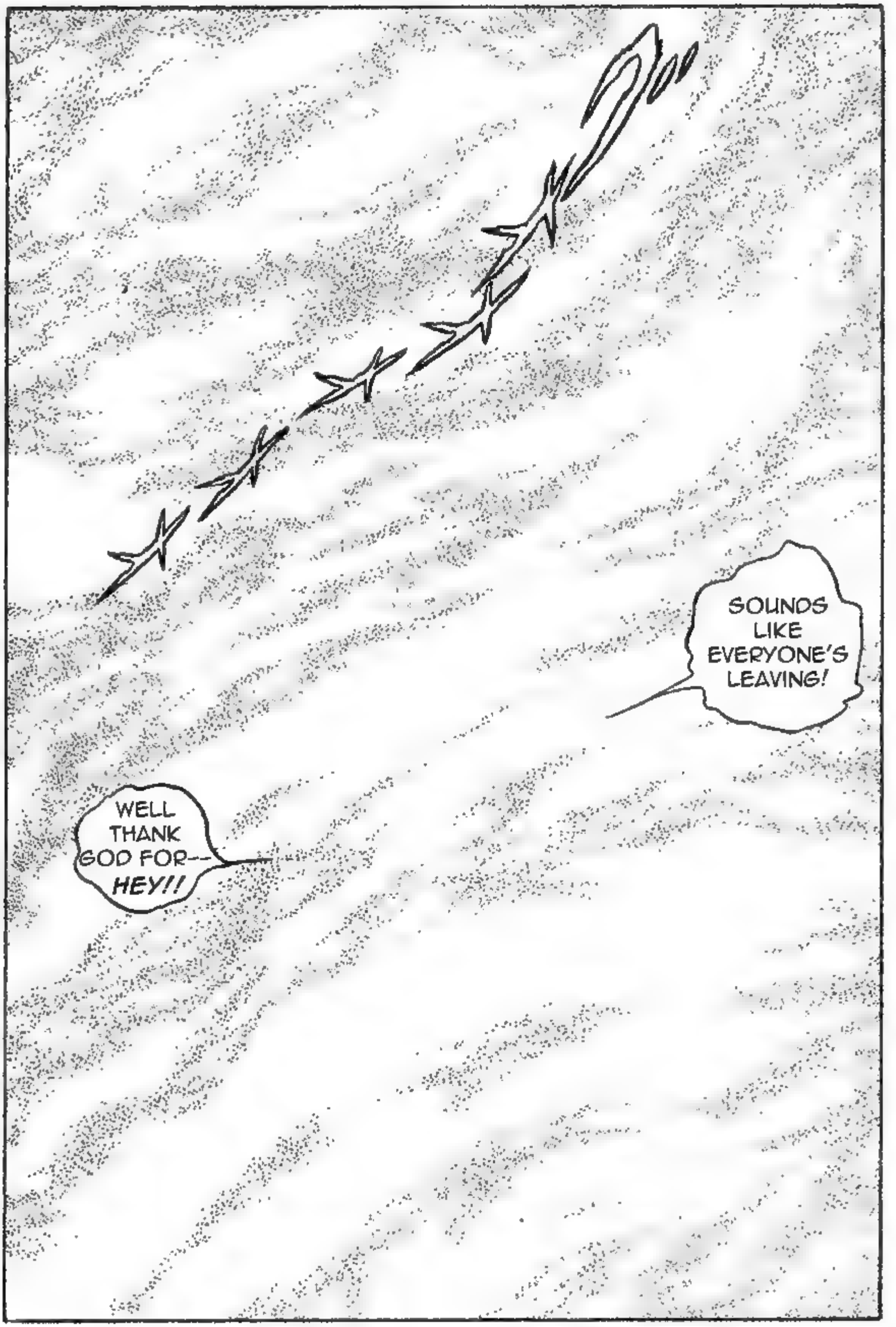
(**) "KEEP PRESSING THE ATTACK! WE'VE ALMOST GOT THEM! SOON THE SCOTCH WILL BE OURS!"

(***) "ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME SAVE THIS ONE, WHICH LEADS TO SCOTCH!"

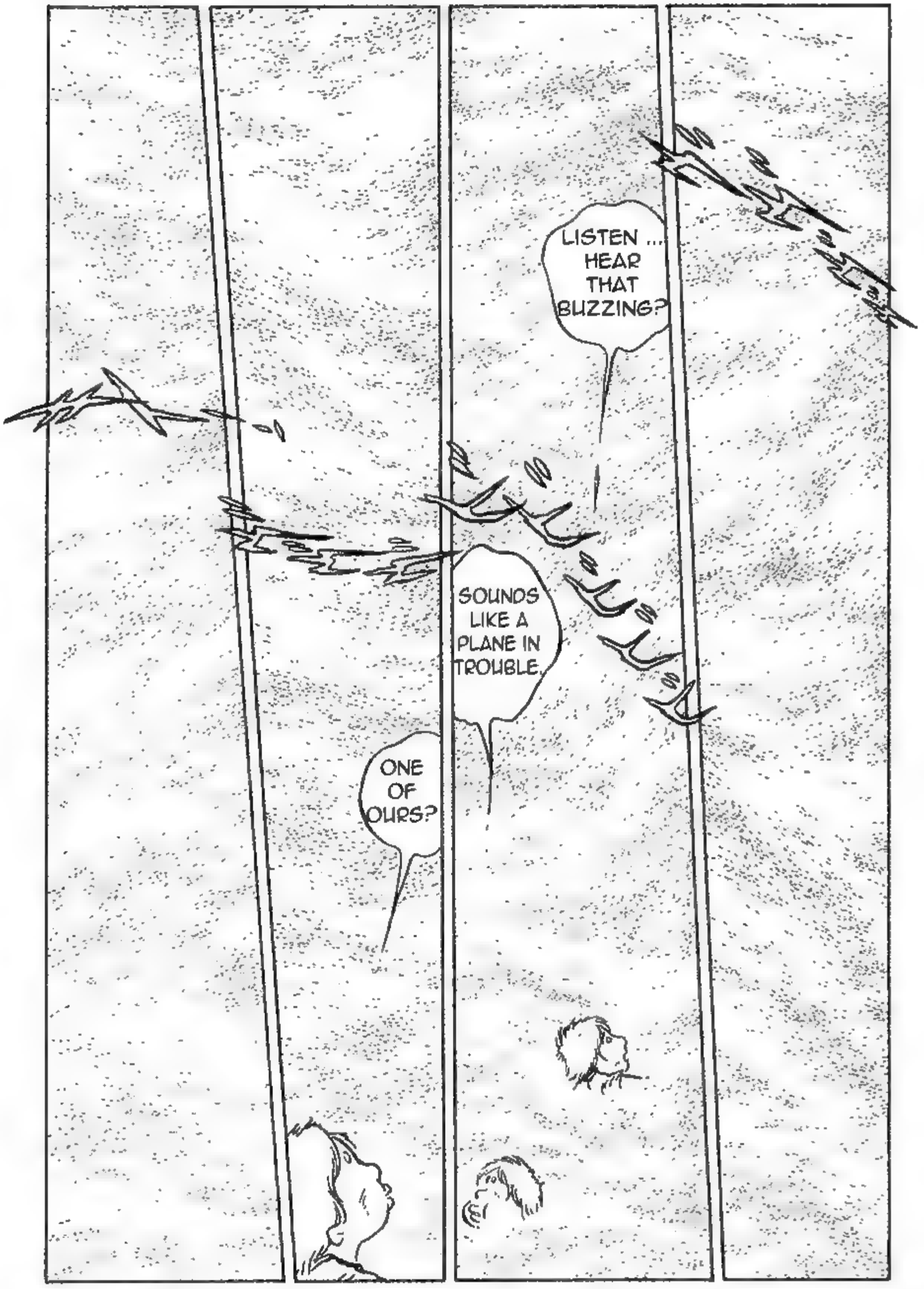


(*) "EAT SHIT AND DIE, YOU PERVERTED CAPITALISTS!" THE JAPANESE ORIGINAL OF THE LAST HALF IS SOMEWHAT STRONGER, READING "YOU ISLAND NATION FULL OF PERVERTS!" "MACARONI" WAS BRITISH WARTIME SLANG FOR AN ITALIAN.


YOU KNOW WHY, DON'T YOU? THAT IS, IF YOU CAN KEEP THE SAND OUT OF YOUR EYES.
HEY! I THINK THE SHOOTING'S LETTING UP! IT STOPPED! WELL HOW 'BOUT THAT?!
SANDSTORM! QUICK!! DON'T LOSE TRACK OF THE SCOTCH!!!


SOUNDS LIKE EVERYONE'S LEAVING!
WELL THANK GOD FOR-- HEY!!

SAND AND SCOTCH (Part 2 of 2)



VISIBILITY IS EXTREMELY LIMITED DUE TO THE SANDSTORM, MAJOR WEINER!

THEN WE'LL HAVE TO FLY AS LOW AS WE CAN, LEUTNANT!

I CAN SMELL IT! THE SCOTCH IS HERE AS REPORTED!

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

HEAD BACK IF YOU WANT! I'LL CONTINUE THE SEARCH ALONE!

WATCH WHAT YOU'RE SAYING! NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE TO A GERMAN! ACH, DAMN ALL THIS SAND!

AND I'LL FIND IT TOO, OR MY NAME ISN'T JOHANN BIELDEN WEINER!*

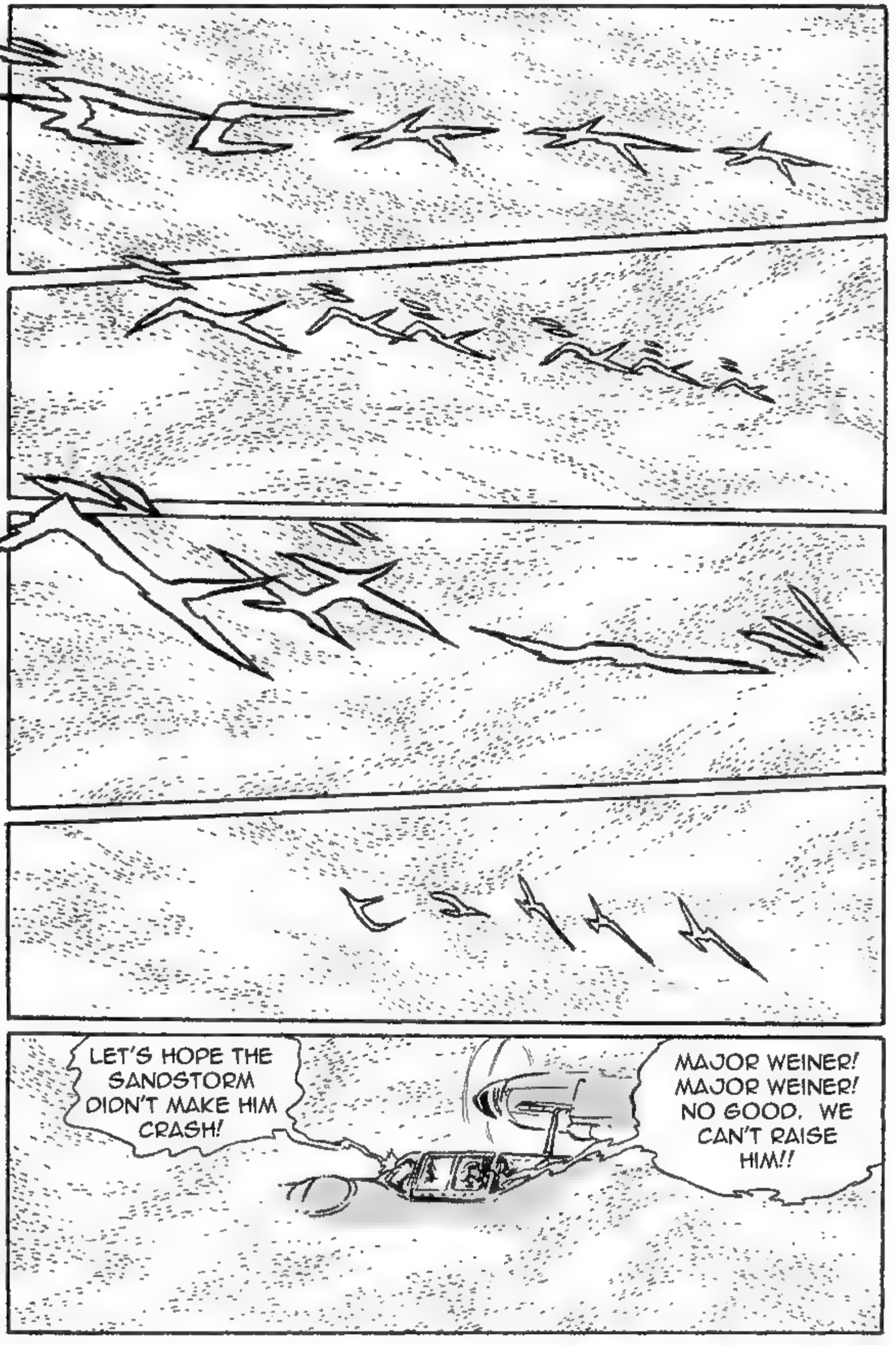
(*) PRONOUNCED "VAI-NAH," AND NOT "WEE-NER" AS MOST AMERICANS TEND TO SAY THE GERMAN NAME.

SAND AND SCOTCH (Part 2 of 2)

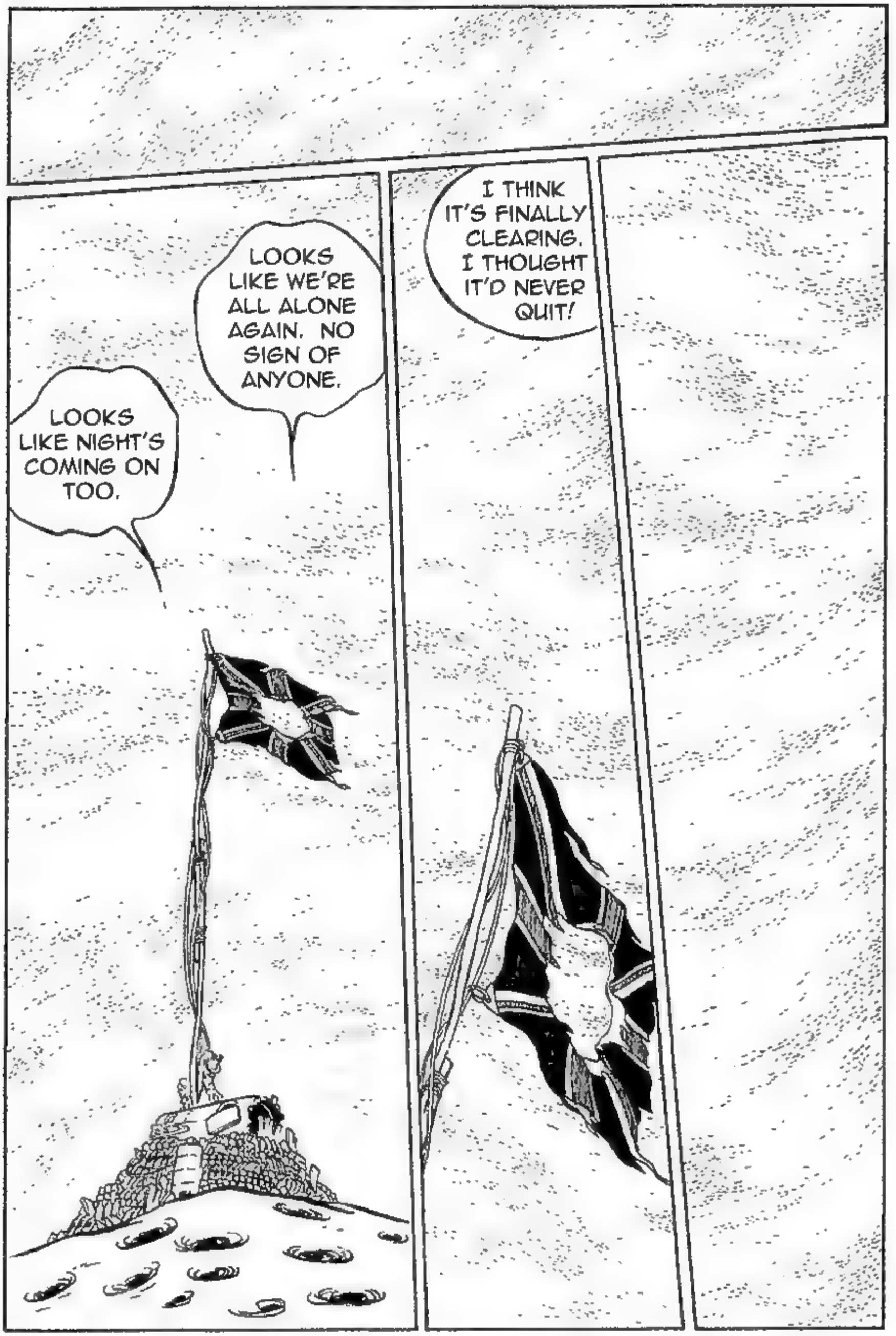
BE CAREFUL, MAJOR WEINER! THERE ARE ITALIAN AND BRITISH PLANES ON THE SEARCH AS WELL!

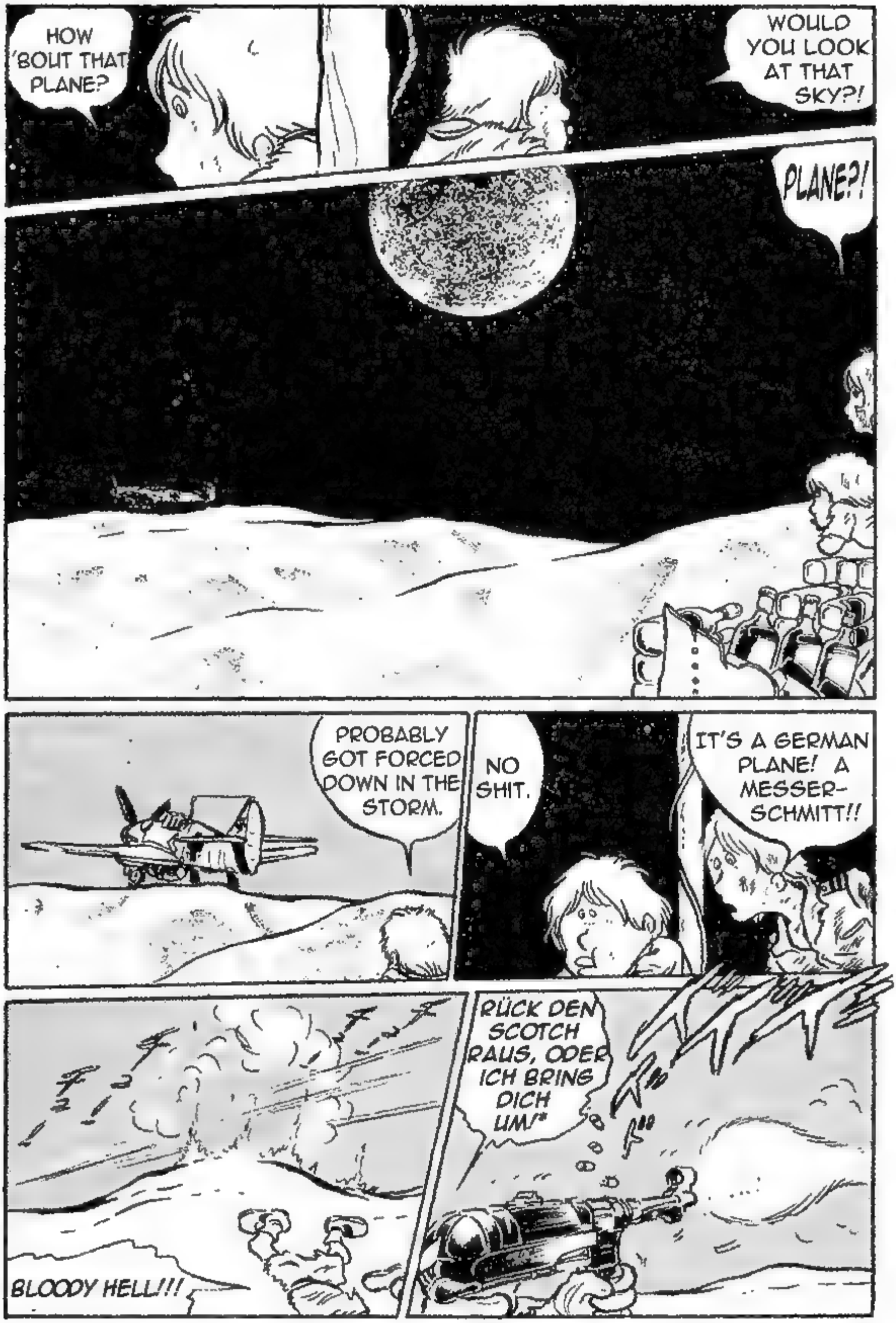
THEY MEAN NOTHING TO ME! I CAN FLY RINGS AROUND THEM EVEN WITH ALL THIS SAND! I WILL FIND THAT SCOTCH, LEUTNANT! YOU CAN COUNT ON IT!

SMELLS LIKE THAT CAPTIALIST CHURCHILL'S FAVORITE, JOHNNIE WALKER BLACK LABEL!


LET'S HOPE THE SANDSTORM DIDN'T MAKE HIM CRASH!
MAJOR WEINER! MAJOR WEINER! NO GOOD. WE CAN'T RAISE HIM!!

SAND AND SCOTCH (Part 2 of 2)





(*) DE. "SURRENDER THE SCOTCH OR I'LL KILL YOU!"

SAND AND SCOTCH (Part 2 of 2)

MAJOR JOHANN BIELDEN WEINER, LUFTWAFFE. BIST DU BEREIT AUFZUGEBEN?*

'ALLO, 'ALLO! WE ARE BRITISH! YOU ARE?

I'M PRIVATE SANBURN, SAME OUTFIT.

HOO BOY. HE IS LIEUTENANT PHILIPS, 3RD TRANSPORT WING.

SPRICHT ZE DEUTSCH?

EEN-GLISH? DO YOU KNOW ANY EN-GLISH?

EST IST UNMÖGLICH! AH, AH, NO CAN DO! AH, EMH- POSSABIL!

AH, OKAY. ACHTUNG! HERE, SCOTCH! ALL YOU WANT! ALLE SCOTCH! ON ONE CONDITION! UHH, EN ZUSTARD!** WE FIX PLANE! FIXIERN PLAN-EN, JA?!

NICHT? ES WAHR *** ....

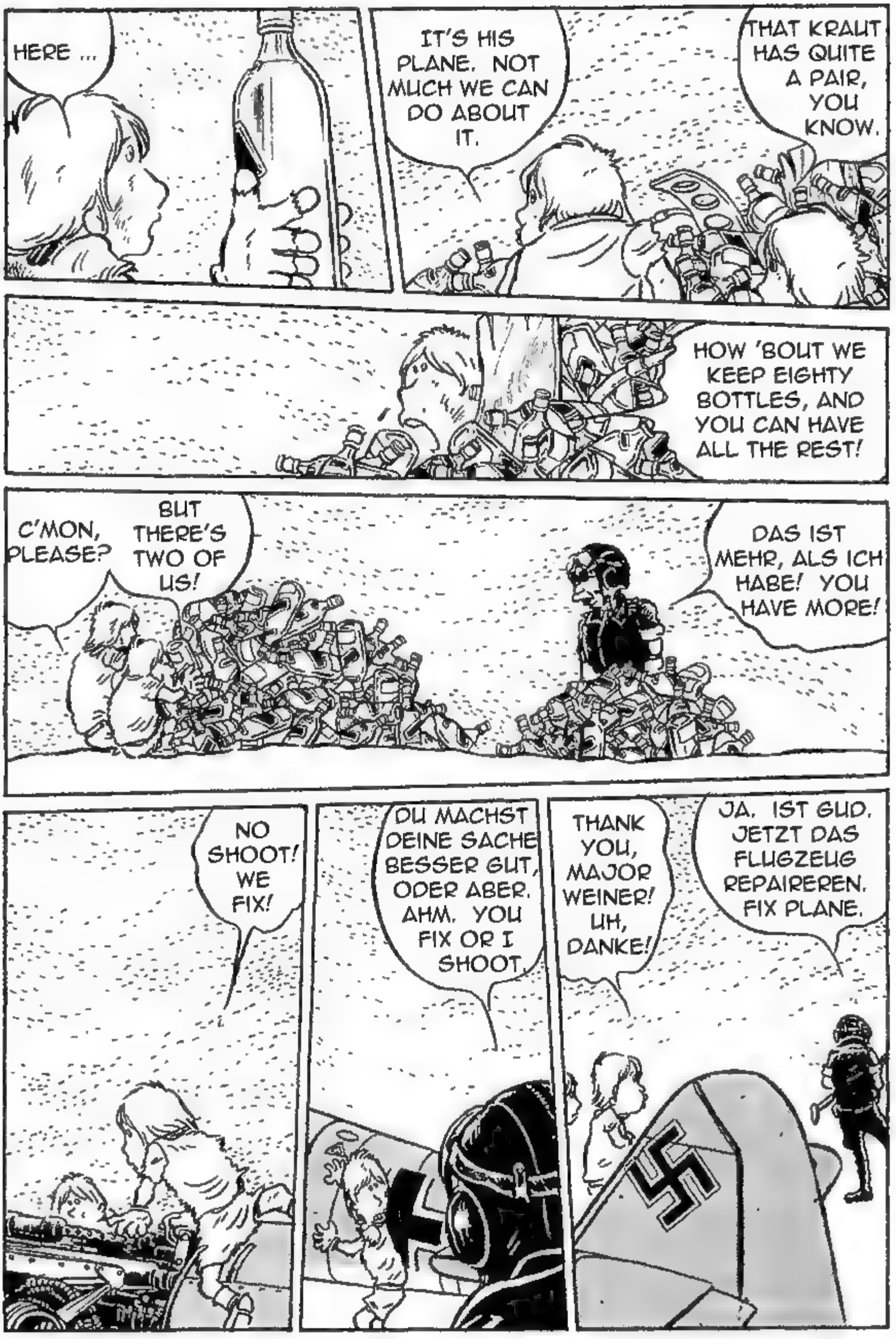
I WAS TOLD THE WORD "IMPOSSIBLE" ISN'T IN THE GERMAN DICTIONARY! AH, AHMM ...

IS OKAY DOKAY!

ENGLANDERS! WIR SIND UNS EINIG, UHMM, WE HAVE DEAL! ME SCOTCH, YOU FIX PLANE! IST OKEY DOKEY?

(*) DE. "ARE YOU READY TO GIVE UP?"
(**) WRONG WORD, WEINER HEARS "ONE CUSTARD!"
(***) DE. "YOU'RE RIGHT. IT ISN'T."

SAND AND SCOTCH (Part 2 of 2)



AND ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT THEY TOILED

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

SKNZXX!

IS IT FIXED? WELL, IT WASN'T A VERY GOOD ENGINE TO--

IST EST BEHO-BEN?

GOOD MORNING TO YOU TOO!

ACH! MORGEN!

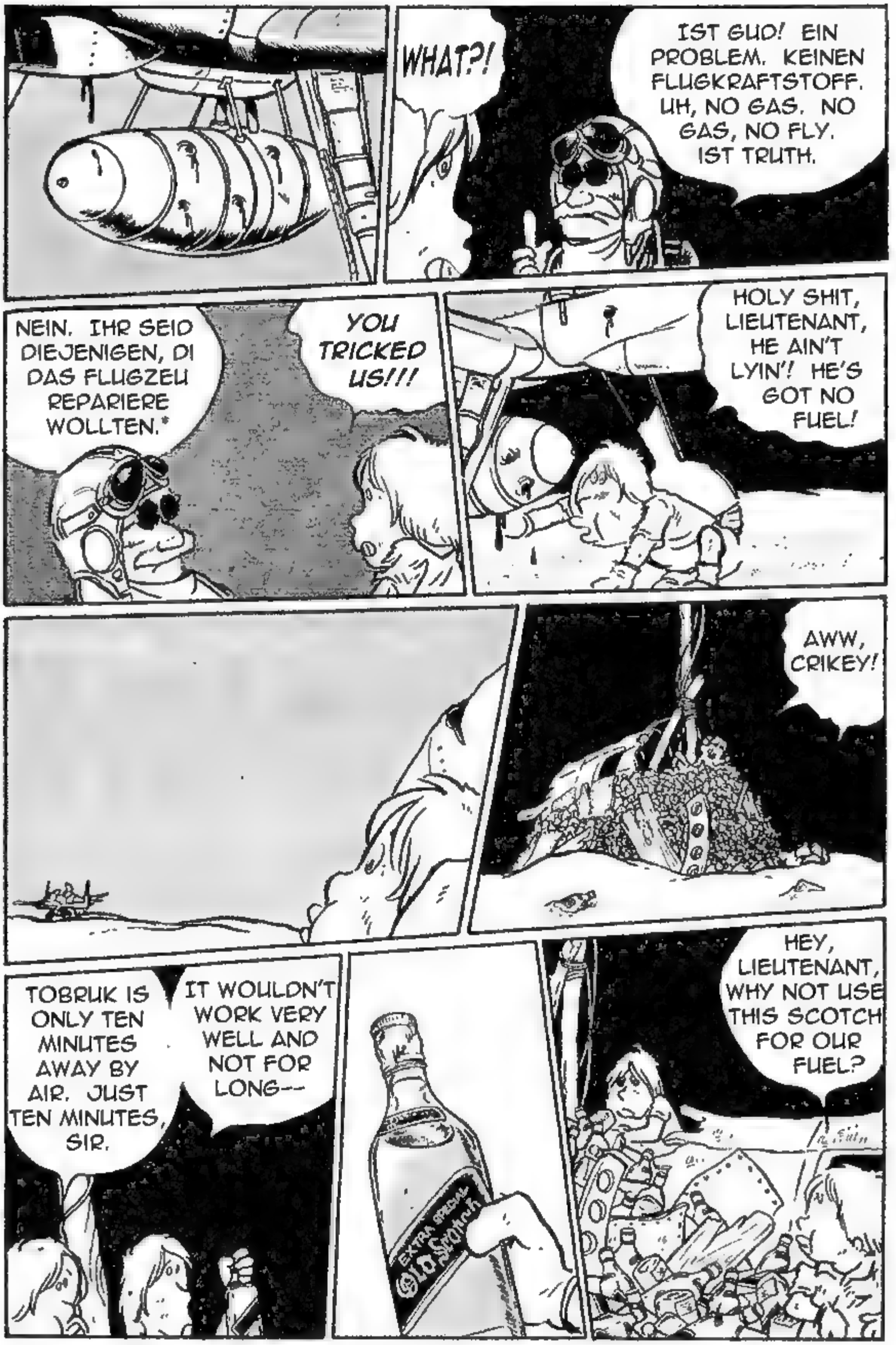
YOU'LL BE HAPPY TO KNOW SHE'S FIXED AND READY TO FLY, SIR!

SORRY! DIDN'T MEAN TO UPSET YOU, MAJOR! SETTLE DOWN!

DEUTSCHE MOTOREN SIND UNÜBERTROFFEN! DU SOLLTEST STOLZ DARAU SEIN, AN EINE ZU ARBEITEN!*

(*) THE MAJOR IS TELLING THEM THAT GERMAN AIRPLANE ENGINES ARE THE BEST.

SAND AND SCOTCH (Part 2 of 2)



(*) DE. "NO I DIDN'T. YOU'RE THE ONES WHO WANTED TO FIX THE PLANE."

DU WILLST MEIN FLUGZEUG MIT SCOTCH FLIEGEN?!

BUT SCOTCH IS STRONG! AH, SCOTCH IST DA VEST!

EIN DEUTSCHER MOTOR, DER MIT BRITISCHEM SCOTCH LÄUFT – SO ETWAS HABE ICH NOCH NIE GEHÖRT!*

IF YOUR GERMAN ENGINE IS AS GOOD AS YOU CLAIM, IT SHOULD RUN ON SCOTCH!

IHR BEIDEN SEID VERRÜCKT, ABER LASST ES UNS VERSUCHEN.** UH, OKEY-DOKEY LET'S TRY.

BOTH HE AND I, AH, STEIK OUR LIF-EN UN DIS!

WE'LL HAVE TO FINE-TUNE YOUR ENGINE A BIT MORE, BUT I PROMISE YOU WE CAN GET IT UP IN THE AIR!

WE CAN MAKE THIS WORK, MAJOR WEINER!

GLUG! GLUG! GLUG! GLUG! GLUG! GLUG! GLUG! GLUG! GLUG!

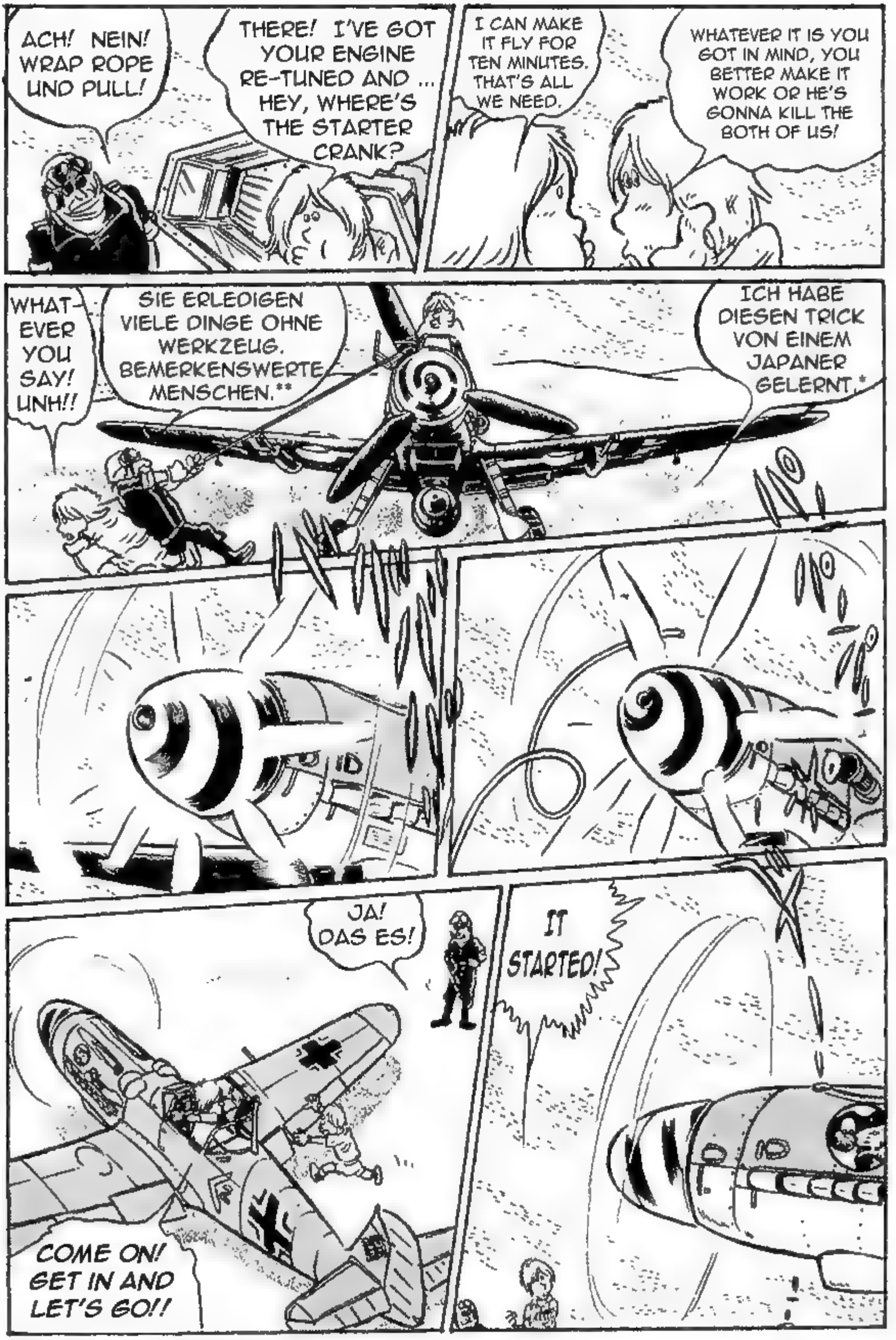
ARE YOU CRAZY?! A PLANE ENGINE CAN'T RUN ON ALCOHOL! JEEZUZ ...

VERSTAN-DEN, BUT I ASSURE YOU IT WILL FLY.

JA. DO IT. IF NO FLY I KILL YOU. VERSTANDEN, BRITE?***

(*) WEINER'S RESPONSE IN FULL – "YOU'RE GOING TO FLY MY PLANE ON SCOTCH?! A GERMAN ENGINE RUNNING ON BRITISH SCOTCH! I'VE NEVER HEARD OF IT!" I.E. "THAT'S RIDICULOUS!"
(**) DE. "YOU TWO ARE CRAZY, BUT LET'S TRY IT."
(***) DE. "VERSTANDEN, BRITE?" = EN. "UNDERSTAND, BRITISH(ER)?"
"BRITE" IS PRONOUNCED "BRIT-EH," NOT ONE WORD LIKE THE ENGLISH "BRITE"

SAND AND SCOTCH (Part 2 of 2)



(*) DE. "I LEARNED THIS TRICK FROM A JAPANESE MAN"
(**) DE. "THEY DO LOTS OF THINGS WITHOUT TOOLS. REMARKABLE PEOPLE."

NEIN ... GO, BRITE!!

HALT!

LET'S GO!

HURRY BEFORE HE SHOOTS!

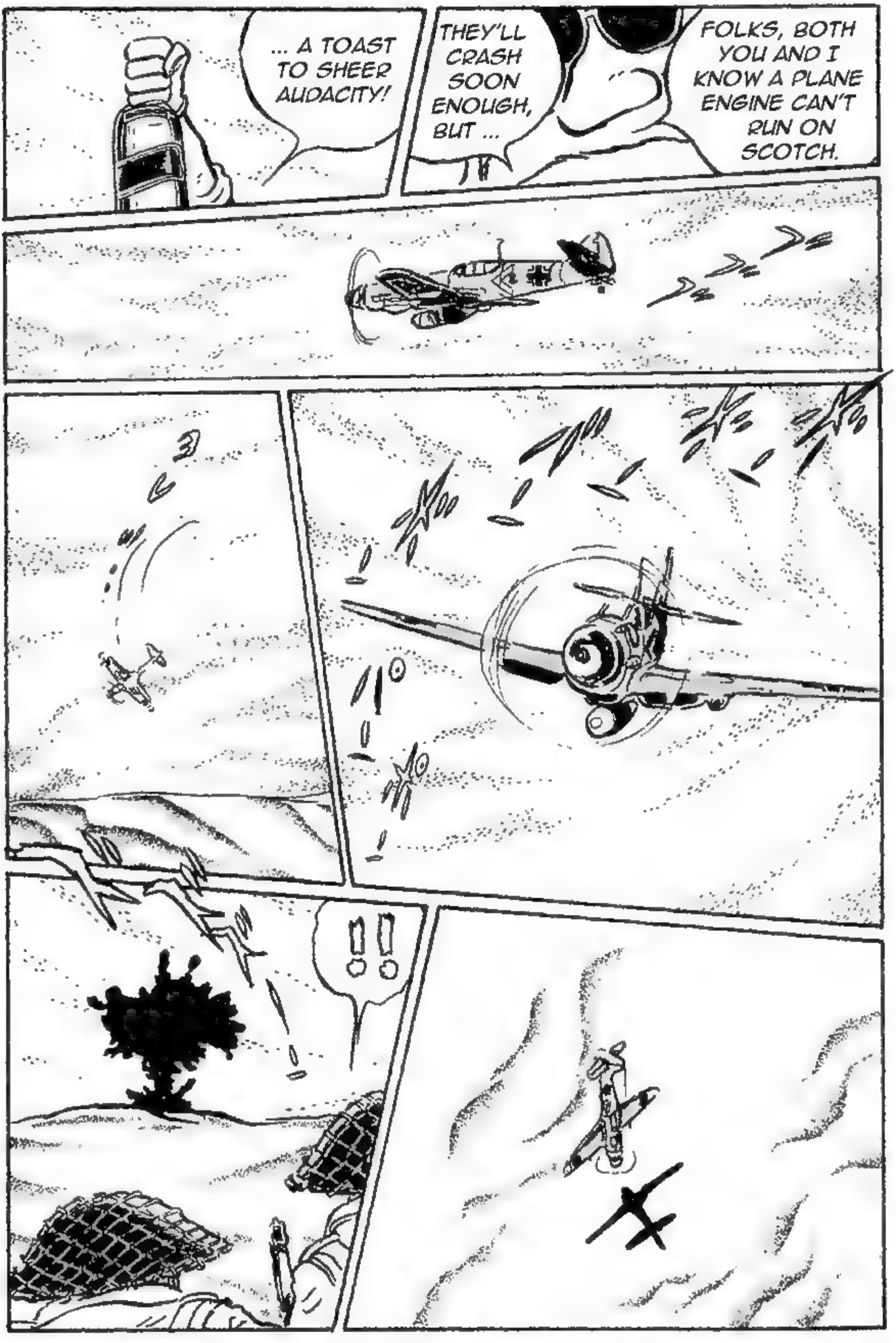
DON'T ARGUE OUR LUCK! TOBRUK, HERE WE COME!!

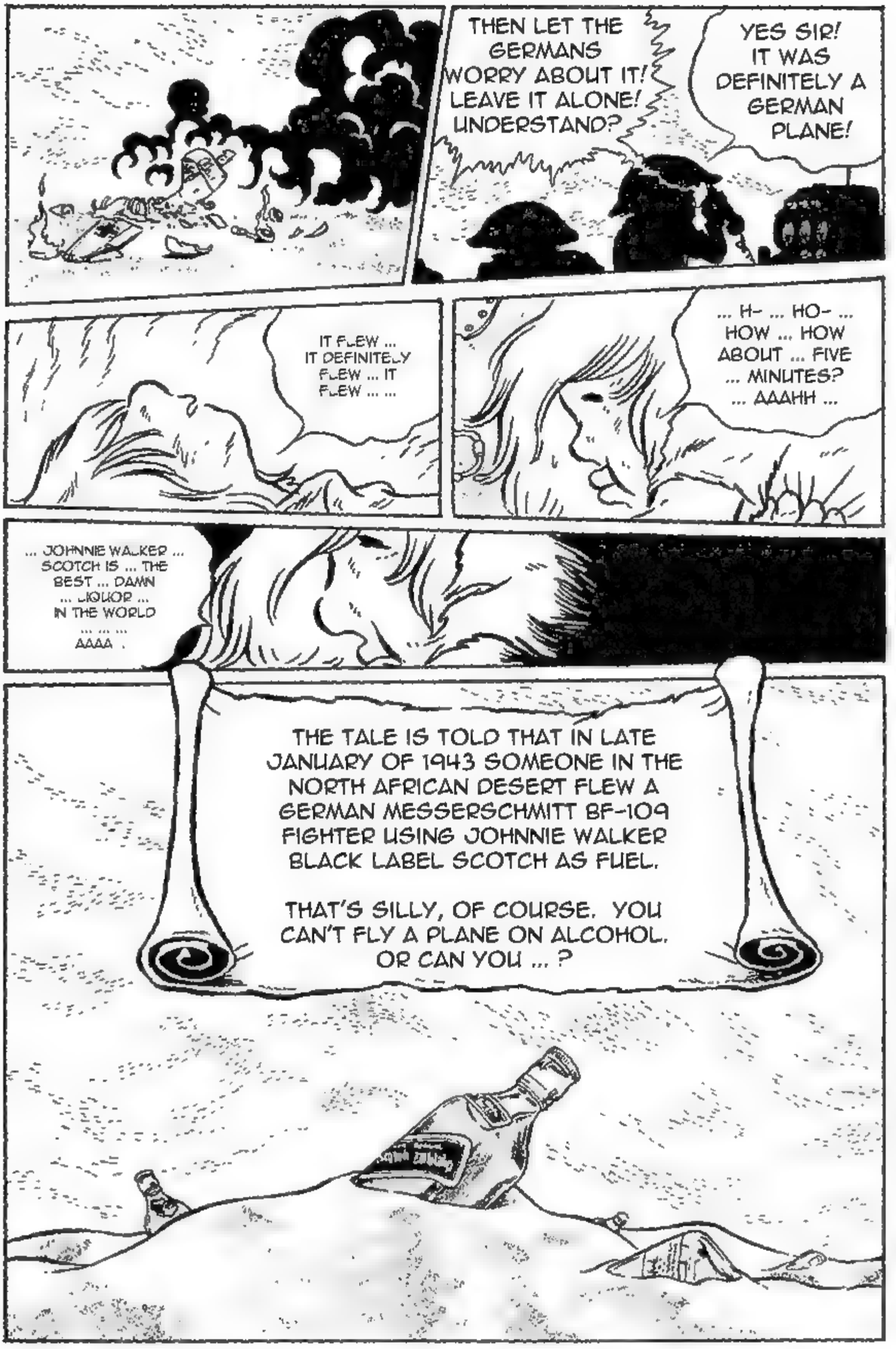
HE'S NOT SHOOTING! HE COULD HAVE SHOT US DOWN! I WONDER WHY HE DIDN'T?

MY PEOPLE WILL BE HERE SOON. THINK I'LL ENJOY SOME SCOTCH WHILE I WAIT.

THEY DID THE IMPOSSIBLE. THEY'RE ALMOST AS SMART AS THAT JAPANESE MAN I MET.

SAND AND SCOTCH (Part 2 of 2)





(Published in Big Comic Original, November 20th and December 5th, 1977 issues)

SAND AND SCOTCH (Part 2 of 2)

MANDELISMS

"Sand and Scotch" is one of my personal favorites in *The Cockpit* series It's another Matsumoto wartime comedy piece in the same vein as his earlier "Black Widow The Demon Machine" and just as funny in its own way, provided you allow for the times which it both depicts and in which it was written Of course it has that dark twist right at the end, but so do a lot of other wartime comedies -- maybe not as much and maybe we don't like to remember those as much, but they're there I'm reminded of the episode of the popular classic American Korean War comedy series *M*A*S*H*, "Abyssinia, Henry," at the end of which popular series character Lt Henry Blake was killed just as he had started on his way home from the war I'm sure there are plenty of other examples the rest of you can think of There's also the underlying seriousness of the situation in which our two unlikely heroes find themselves, which reminds me of the classic postwar feature film *The Flight of the Phoenix* The comedy of course comes from what was in those wrecked planes, how the duo of Philips and Sanburn deal with it, and how they also deal with everybody else who subsequently shows up to claim what they've found

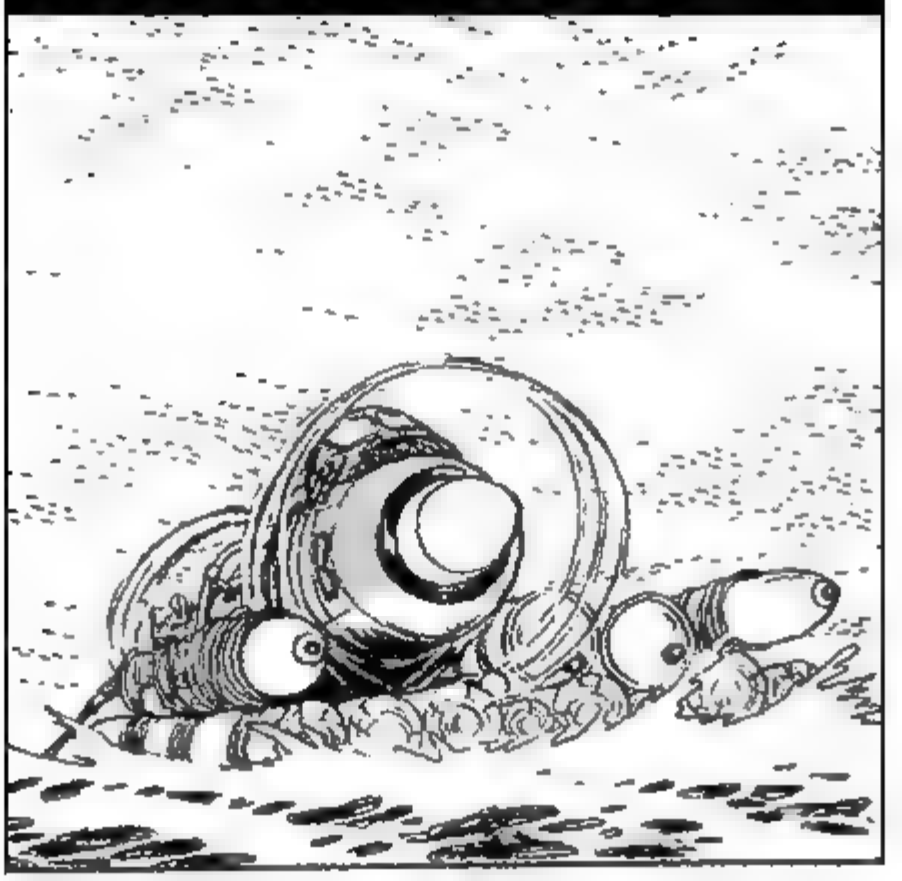
BTW this is one of the very few tales in *The Cockpit* series that are completely Western-oriented, that is, no Japanese characters major or minor nor is there any significant mention of the Japanese in any way as part of the story The first one of those we encounted was "The Iron Cross of Africa" way back in Volume 4 Yes, they are few and far between, but let me remind you that Matsumoto was a Japanese author creating his stories at the time for a Japanese audience He couldn't do too many of these or he was going to lose his intended audience Once he got his base audience built up then he could start including, uhm, "other things" -- and that pregnant phrase covers a LOT of ground where Matsumoto is concerned (knowing wink)

The featured wartime technology in this tale right off the bat is an Allied transport plane that I'll bet most of you never heard of, let alone even existed It's the American built Curtiss C-46 Commando, one of the largest transport planes of the war on either side It could carry three times as much as the smaller but better known Douglas DC-3/C-47, however, it had a bad reputation for either crashing or mysteriously exploding in mid-flight that plagued it throughout the war and well into the early Cold War era The reason for the many crashes was the same that Matsumoto depicts in his tale it frequently got overloaded due to "the needs of the war" and couldn't handle the extra weight That at least is understandable What hurt it even more were those mysterious in-flight explosions, but as for that and how that issue eventually got resovled (but way too late to save its reputation) I'll let you look up on your own

BTW I used Google Translate to have all non-English speakers talking in their own native languages -- so if their dialogue is bad then it's entirely my fault and my apologies in advance

TALES FROM THE COCKPIT

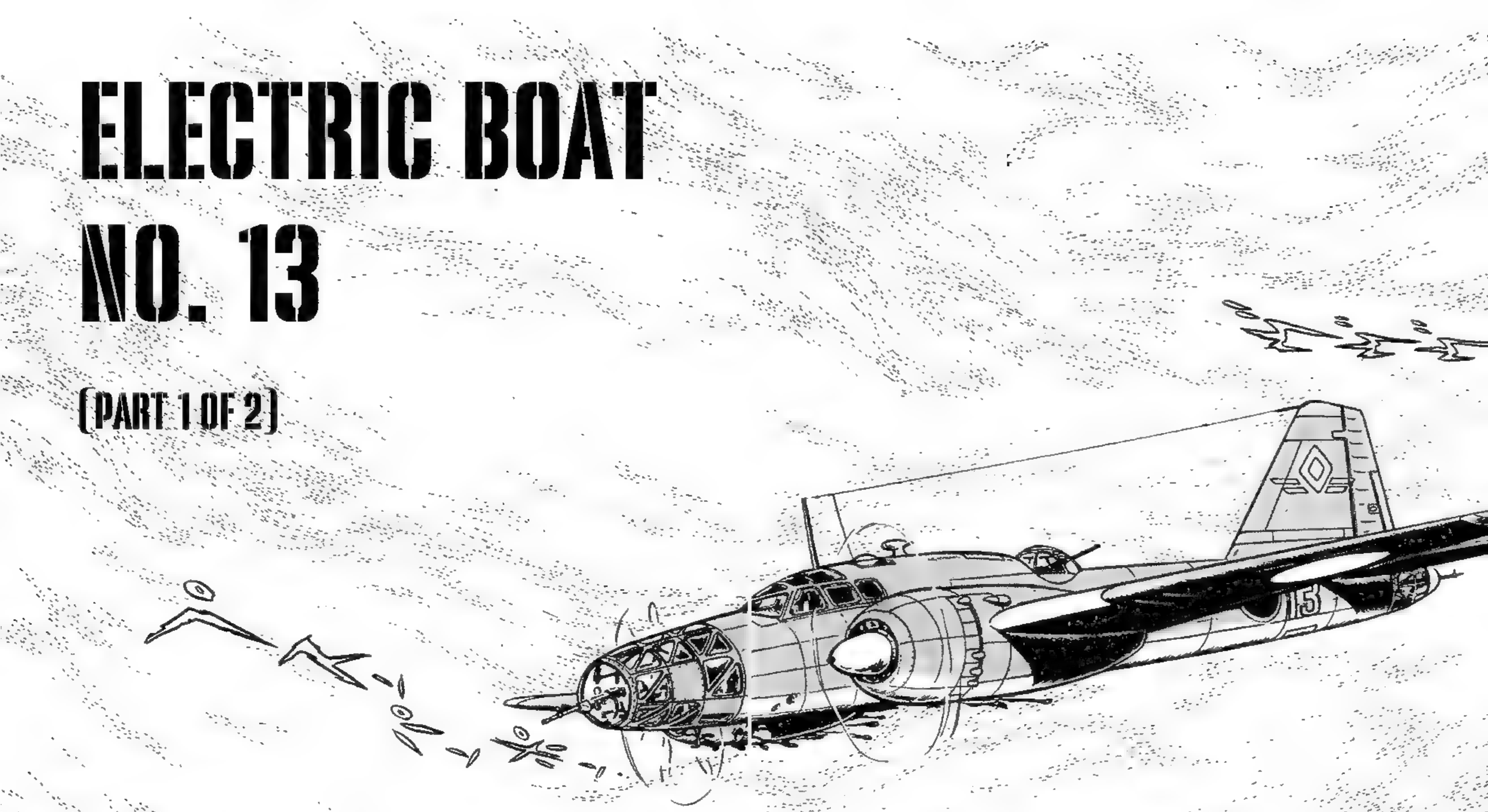
ELECTRIC BOAT No. 13 (PARTS 1 AND 2)

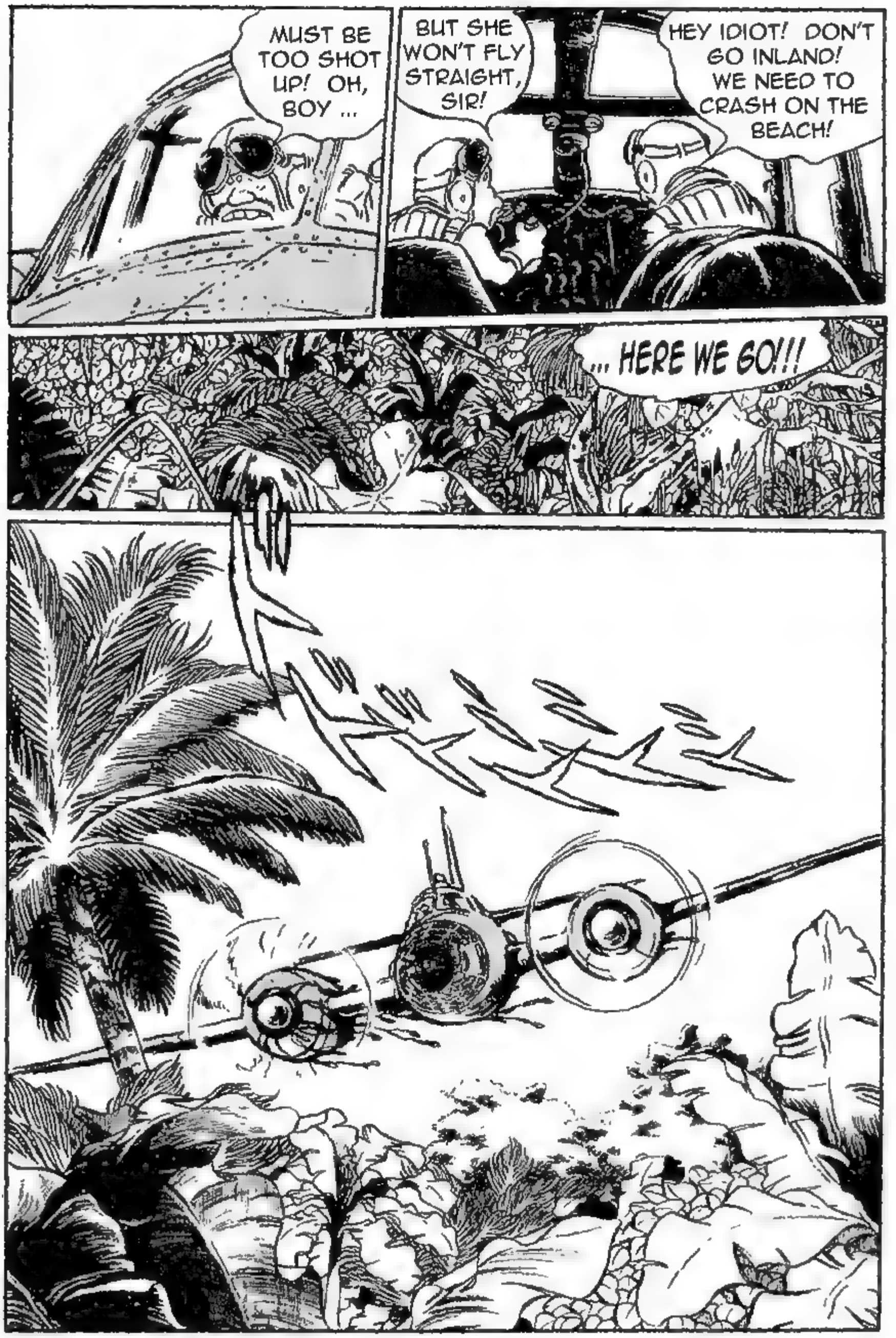


ELECTRIC BOAT No. 13 (PART 1 OF 2)

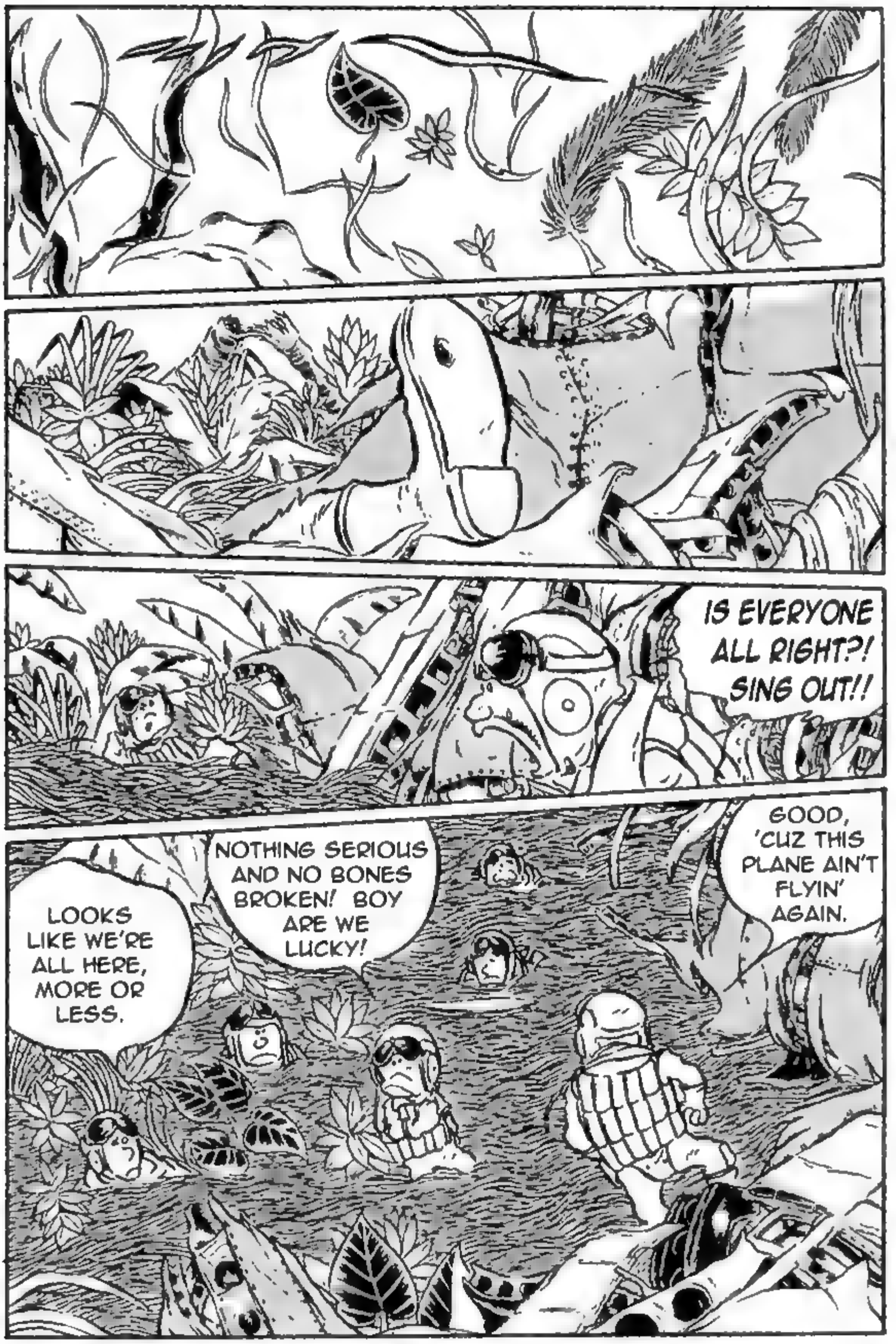
ELECTRIC BOAT NO. 13

(PART 1 OF 2)




MUST BE TOO SHOT UP! OH, BOY ...
BUT SHE WON'T FLY STRAIGHT, SIR!
HEY IDIOT! DON'T GO INLAND! WE NEED TO CRASH ON THE BEACH!
... HERE WE GO!!!

ELECTRIC BOAT No. 13 (PART 1 OF 2)


IS EVERYONE ALL RIGHT?! SING OUT!!
GOOD, 'CUZ THIS PLANE AIN'T FLYIN' AGAIN.
NOTHING SERIOUS AND NO BONES BROKEN! BOY ARE WE LUCKY!
LOOKS LIKE WE'RE ALL HERE, MORE OR LESS.

ELECTRIC BOAT No. 13 (PART 1 OF 2)

MIZUTA USED TO BE WITH THE PUBLIC WATER UTILITY BACK HOME. MAYBE HE—

NO FRESH WATER, NO SURVIVAL. GET IT?

WHY? DO YOU NEED A DRINK?

FIRST THINGS FIRST. FRESH WATER.

NOT THAT IT MATTERS. THERE'S NO ROADS.

ME, I WAS A USED CAR DEALER. THERE'S NOTHING HERE, SO I'VE NOTHING TO DO.

I'VE HEARD OF SUCH THINGS. IT'S PROBABLY A PATH MADE AND USED BY ANIMALS.

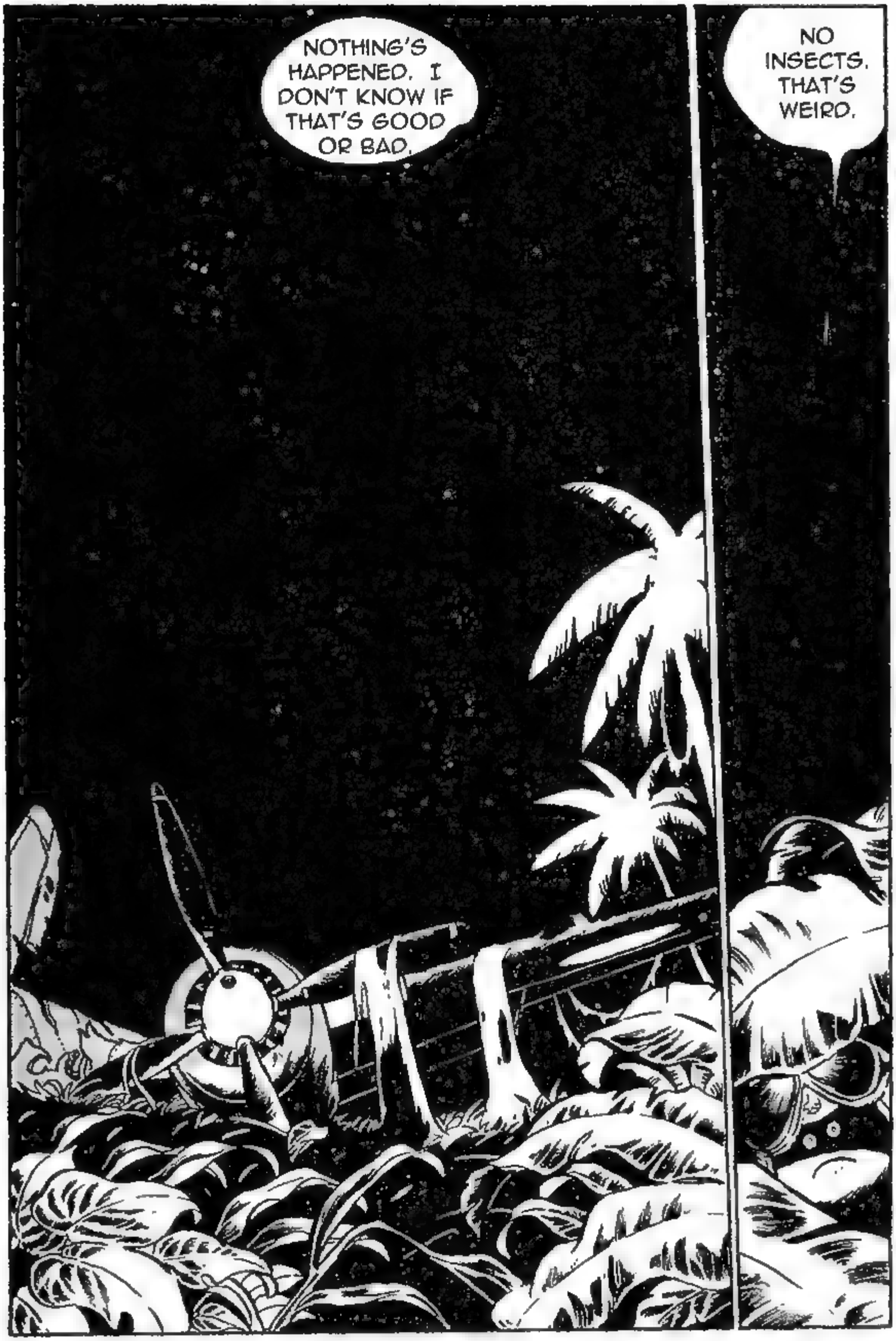
THIS LOOKS LIKE A PATH. I'LL BET A BICYCLE COULD RIDE IT.

IF WE WAIT LONG ENOUGH SOMEONE ELSE WILL SHOW UP. BUT WHO?

HARD TO SAY.

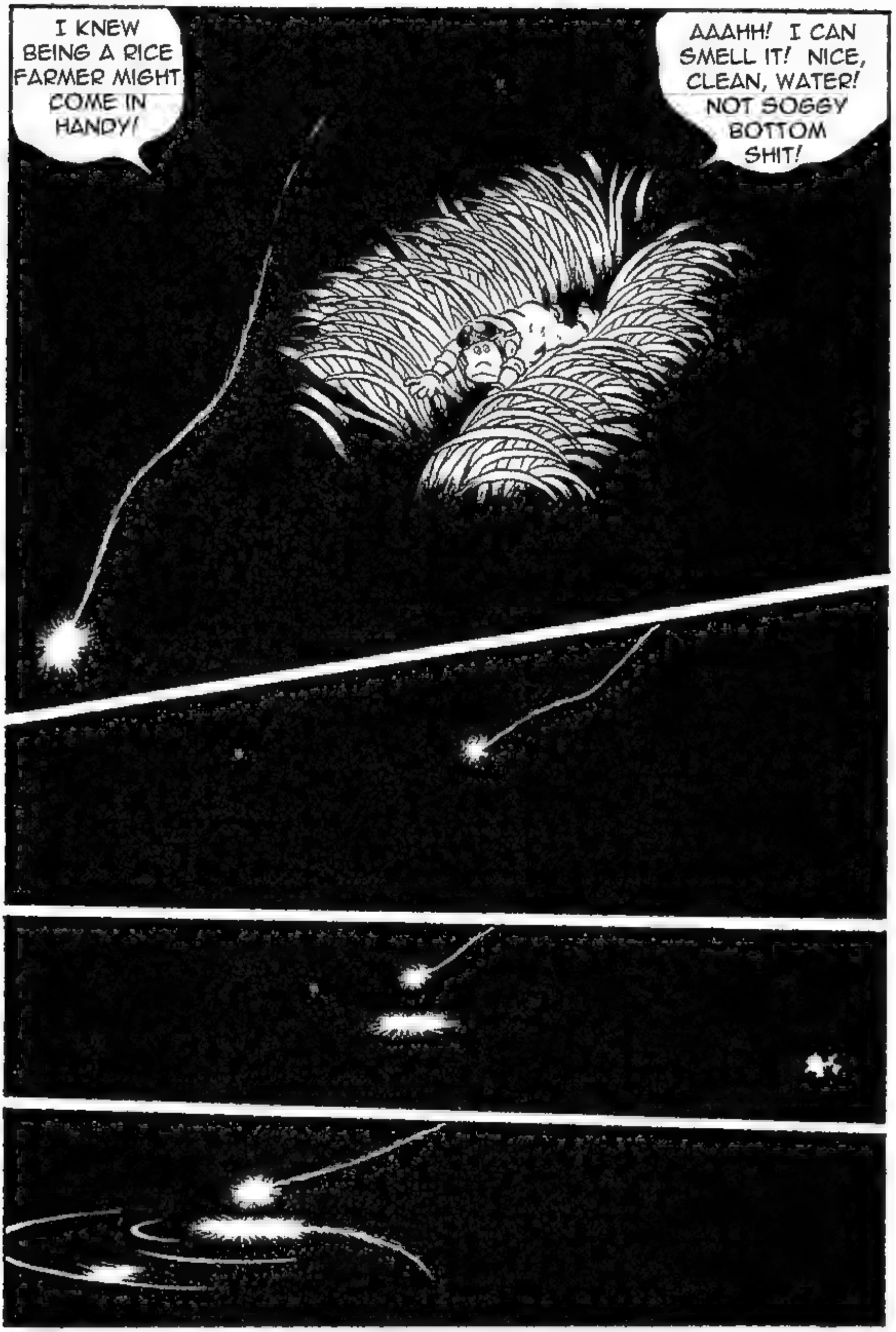
DO YOU THINK ANYONE ELSE IS HERE?

ELECTRIC BOAT No. 13 (PART 1 OF 2)



HEY! A FIREFLY!
AND WHERE THERE'S FIREFLIES, THERE'S WATER!
I'M GLAD THAT YOU VOLUNTEERED TO DO IT!
ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS TO FOLLOW THE FIREFLIES TO THE WATER!
WHATEVER. I'LL BE BACK SOON!

ELECTRIC BOAT No. 13 (PART 1 OF 2)



BY THE GODS, WOULD YOU LOOK AT ALL OF THAT--
WA!! WAH!!!

ELECTRIC BOAT No. 13 (PART 1 OF 2)

WHAT'S GOING ON?!
WA ... WO ... NEH ...
THAT SOUNDS LIKE AN AMERICAN PISTOL!
SLAP! SLAP! SLAP!
COME ON! PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER! YOU'RE NOT MAKING ANY SENSE!
NAKED! BIG! FIREFLY!!
WA ... WATER ... FIREFLY ... ... WOMAN ... GUN ... BIG! ...
I ALSO PROBABLY NEED TO GET HIM TO A WHOREHOUSE WHEN WE GET BACK. THAT IS, IF WE GET BACK.
WHATEVER HE SAW SHOOK HIM UP BAD. IT'S GOING TO TAKE A WHILE FOR HIM TO SETTLE DOWN.
I FOUND THE GUN BUT A NAKED FIREFLY SHOT THE WATER WITH A VERY BIG WOMAN! AAAHH!!

ABOUT AN HOUR LATER ...

KID, ONE OF THESE DAYS YOU AND I HAVE GOT TO HAVE A LONG TALK. AT LEAST YOU FOUND THE WATER.

... AND THIS IS WHERE I SAW HER! A NAKED WOMAN WITH A GUN!

HMMM ... MAYBE YOU DID SEE WHAT YOU SAY YOU SAW.

HEY! I SMELL GUNPOW-DER!

I-I WAS TOO SCARED AND SHOCKED, SIR! IMAGINE A NAKED WOMAN WITH A BIG GUN!

DID YOU EVEN THINK TO SHOOT BACK, KID?

SCORE TWO FOR THE KID.

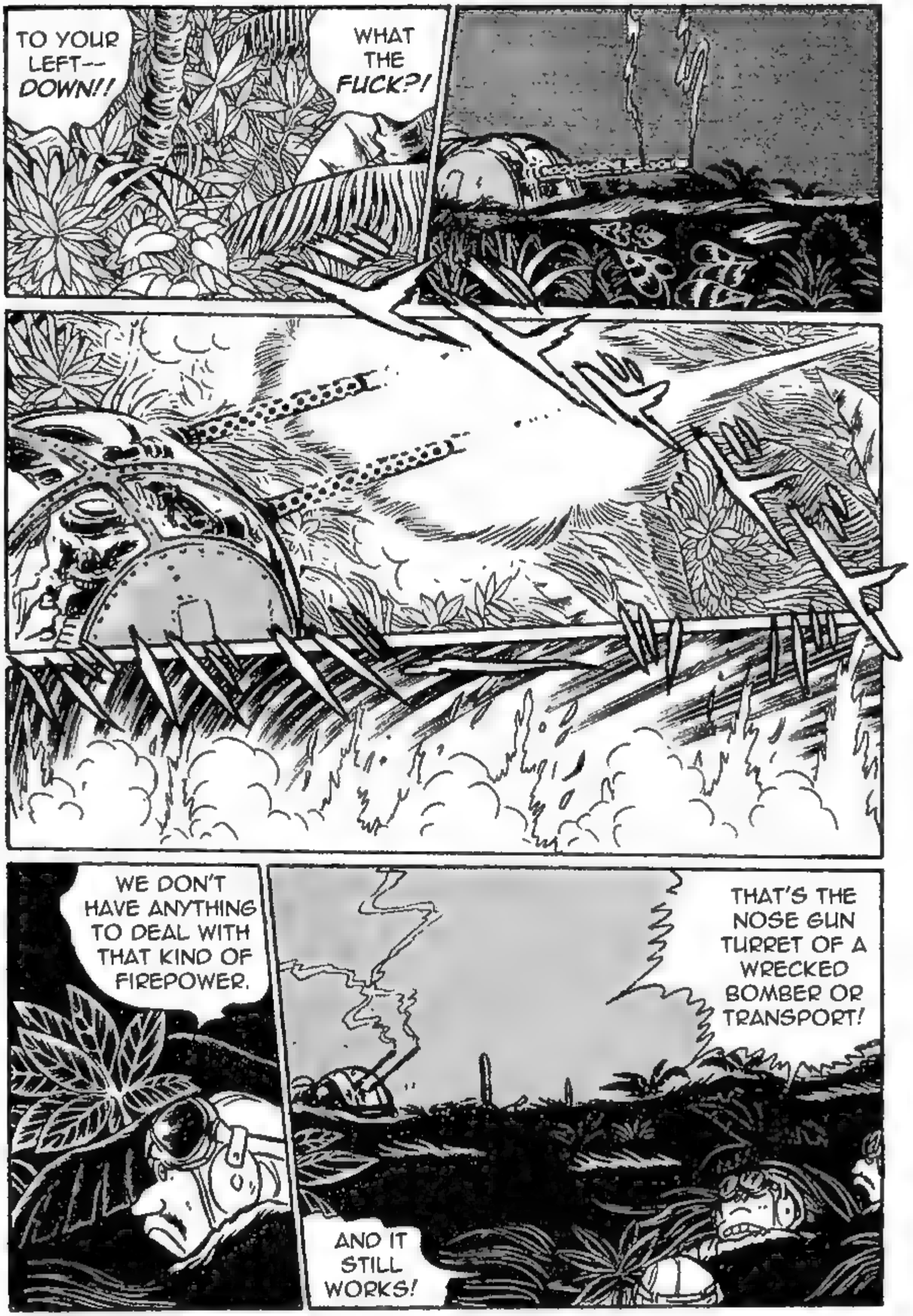
IT'S A COLT .45 ACP SHELL CASING.

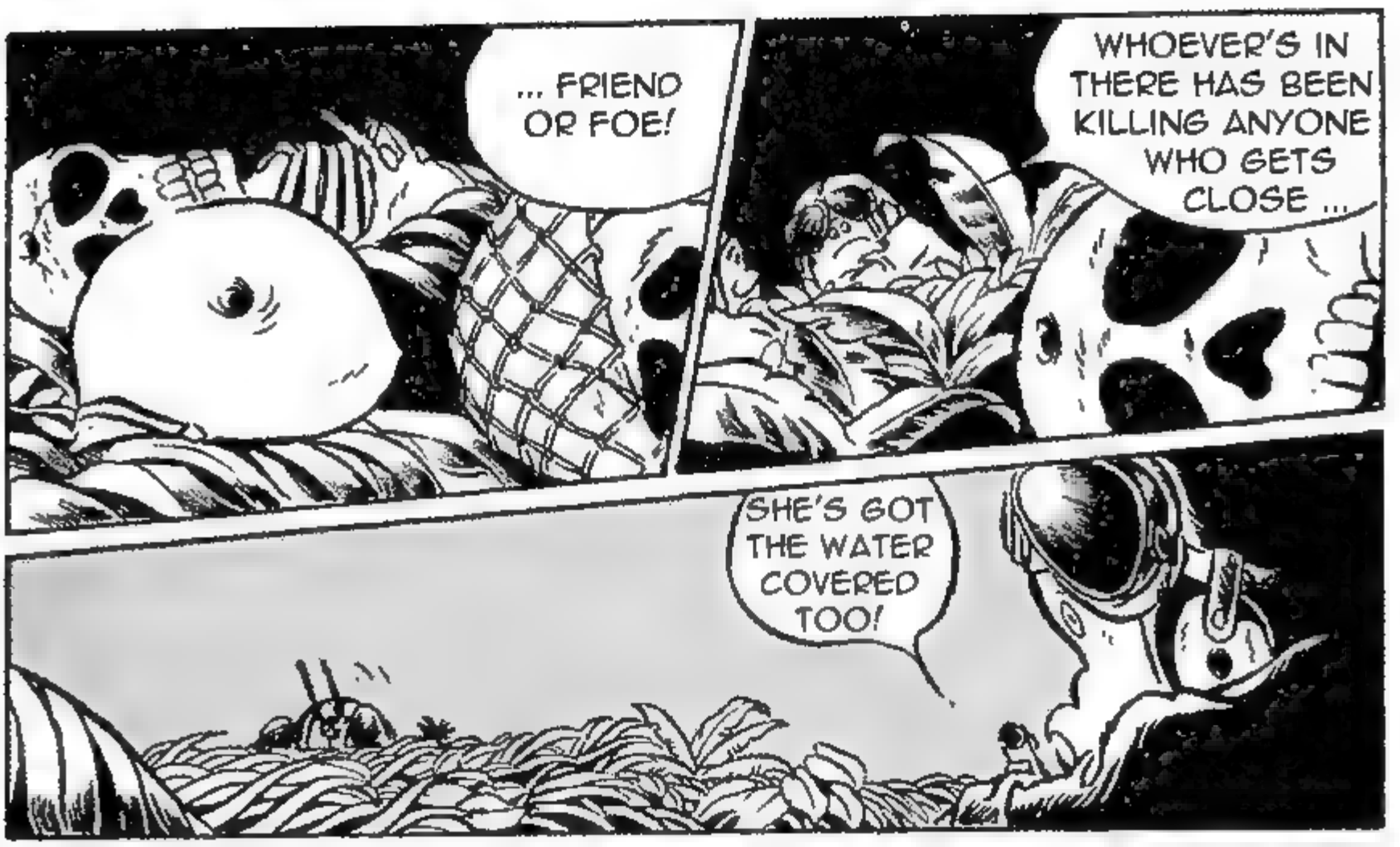
HEY! WHAT'S THIS?

HEY, LOOK OVER THERE!
IT WAS JUST HER, I TELL YOU! A BEAUTIFUL NAKED WOMAN WITH A VERY BIG GUN!!
AND SOME HAVE BEEN HERE FOR A WHILE. PHEW!
BODIES ..

ELECTRIC BOAT No. 13 (PART 1 OF 2)

ELECTRIC BOAT No. 13 (PART 1 OF 2)




... FRIEND OR FOE!
WHOEVER'S IN THERE HAS BEEN KILLING ANYONE WHO GETS CLOSE ...
SHE'S GOT THE WATER COVERED TOO!

ELECTRIC BOAT No. 13 (PART 1 OF 2)

ON A LONELY UNNAMED ISLAND LITERALLY IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE, A SMALL GROUP OF MEN FIGHT TO SURVIVE.

ARE WE MORE FIT THAN HER?

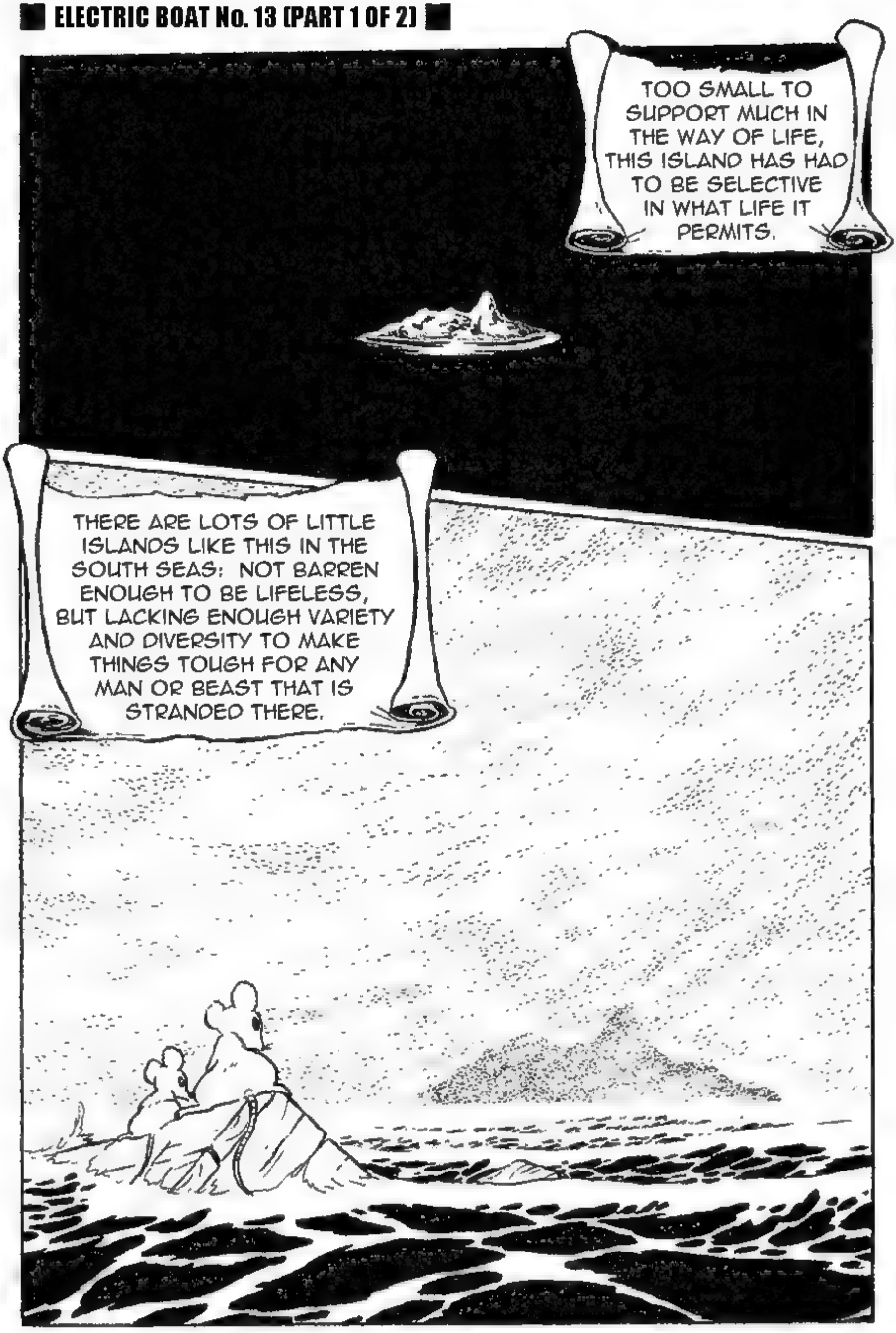
IT'S SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST, GUYS.

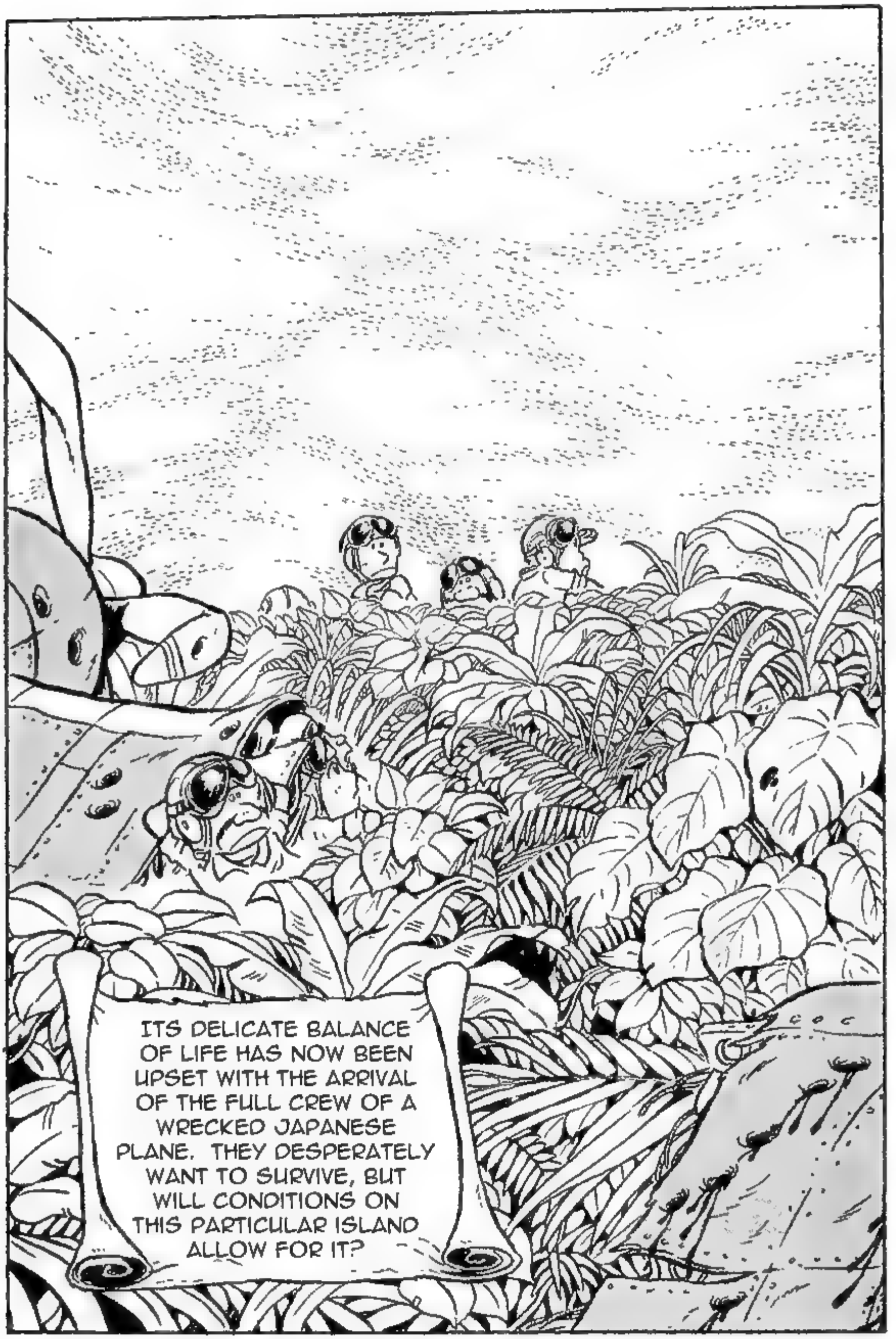
LIKE THAT WOMAN. SHE'S PRETTY MUCH CLAIMED THIS ISLAND FOR HERSELF ...

... AND BY LUCK OF THE DRAW SHE'S GOT THE RESOURCES TO BACK UP HER CLAIM. THE PROOF IS ALL AROUND US.

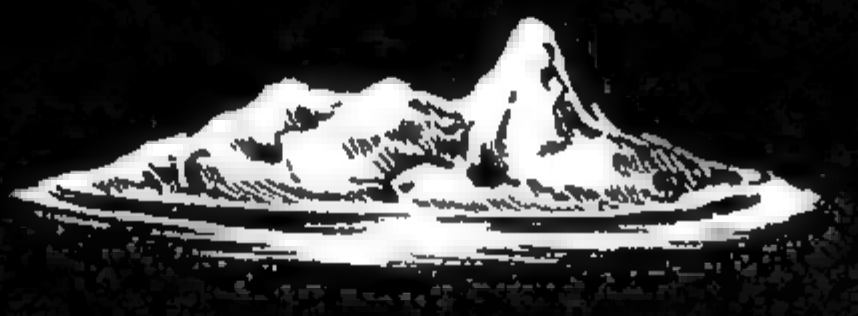
IT'S PROBABLY TOO FAR OUT FOR MOST SPECIES' MIGRATION.

AND ON TOP OF THAT THE HARDIER SPECIES MOST LIKELY ATE ALL OF THE LESS HARDY ONES.


TOO SMALL TO SUPPORT MUCH IN THE WAY OF LIFE, THIS ISLAND HAS HAD TO BE SELECTIVE IN WHAT LIFE IT PERMITS.
THERE ARE LOTS OF LITTLE ISLANDS LIKE THIS IN THE SOUTH SEAS: NOT BARREN ENOUGH TO BE LIFELESS, BUT LACKING ENOUGH VARIETY AND DIVERSITY TO MAKE THINGS TOUGH FOR ANY MAN OR BEAST THAT IS STRANDED THERE.


ITS DELICATE BALANCE OF LIFE HAS NOW BEEN UPSET WITH THE ARRIVAL OF THE FULL CREW OF A WRECKED JAPANESE PLANE. THEY DESPERATELY WANT TO SURVIVE, BUT WILL CONDITIONS ON THIS PARTICULAR ISLAND ALLOW FOR IT?

ELECTRIC BOAT No. 13 (PART 1 OF 2)



TO BE CONTINUED ...

DAMMIT! I'M TIRED OF HER SHOOTING AT US!!!
BACK AT YA, BITCH!!
I DON'T CARE, IT MAKES ME FEEL BETTER!!
KNOCK IT OFF! THAT'S NOT GOING TO HELP! SHE'S GOT--
HERE'S MORE!
WHAT TH ...
AHH! FRESH FOOD! LET'S GET IT BEFORE--

ELECTRIC BOAT NO. 13

(PART 2 OF 2)

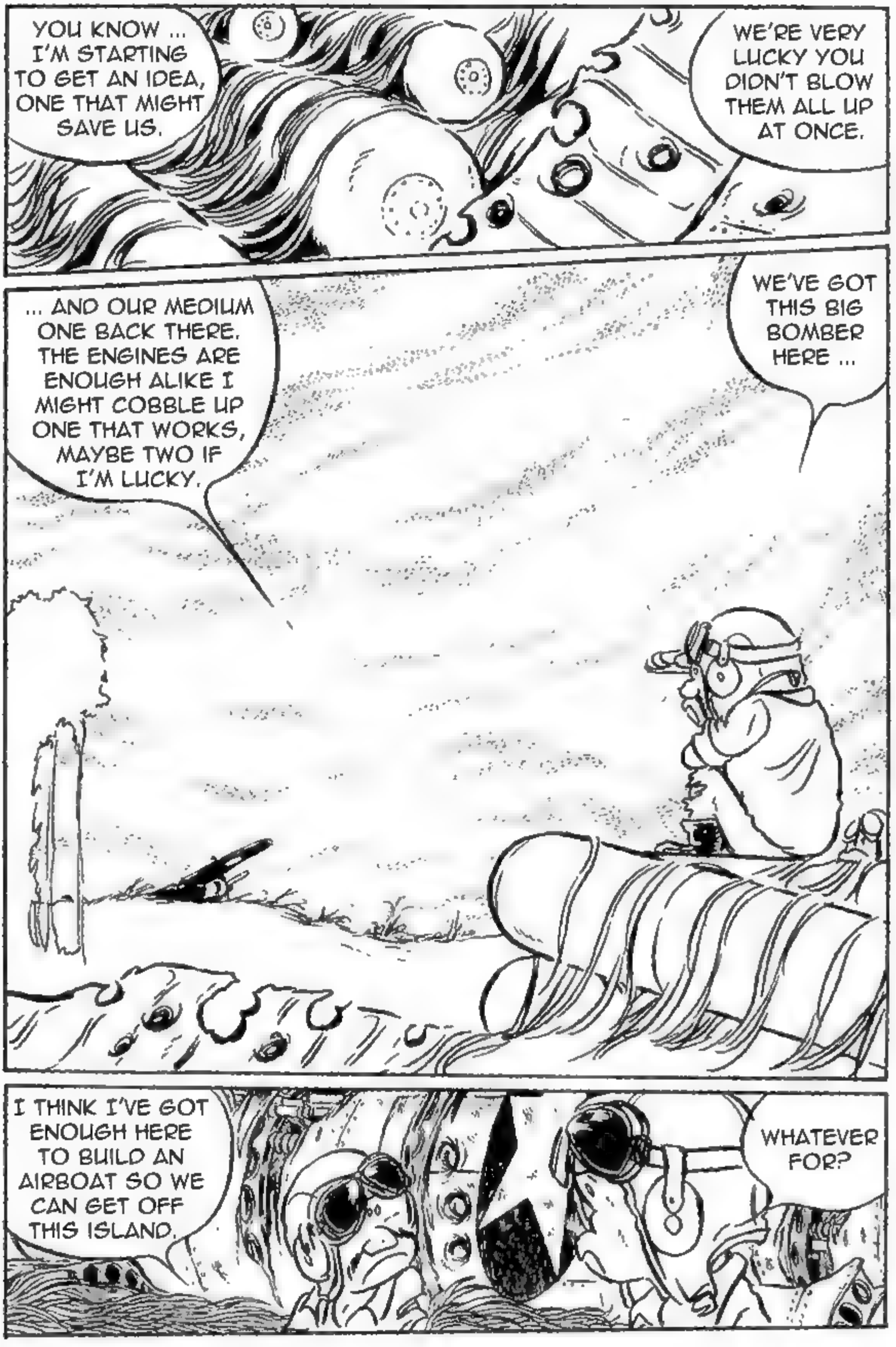
WHAT DID I HIT?!?

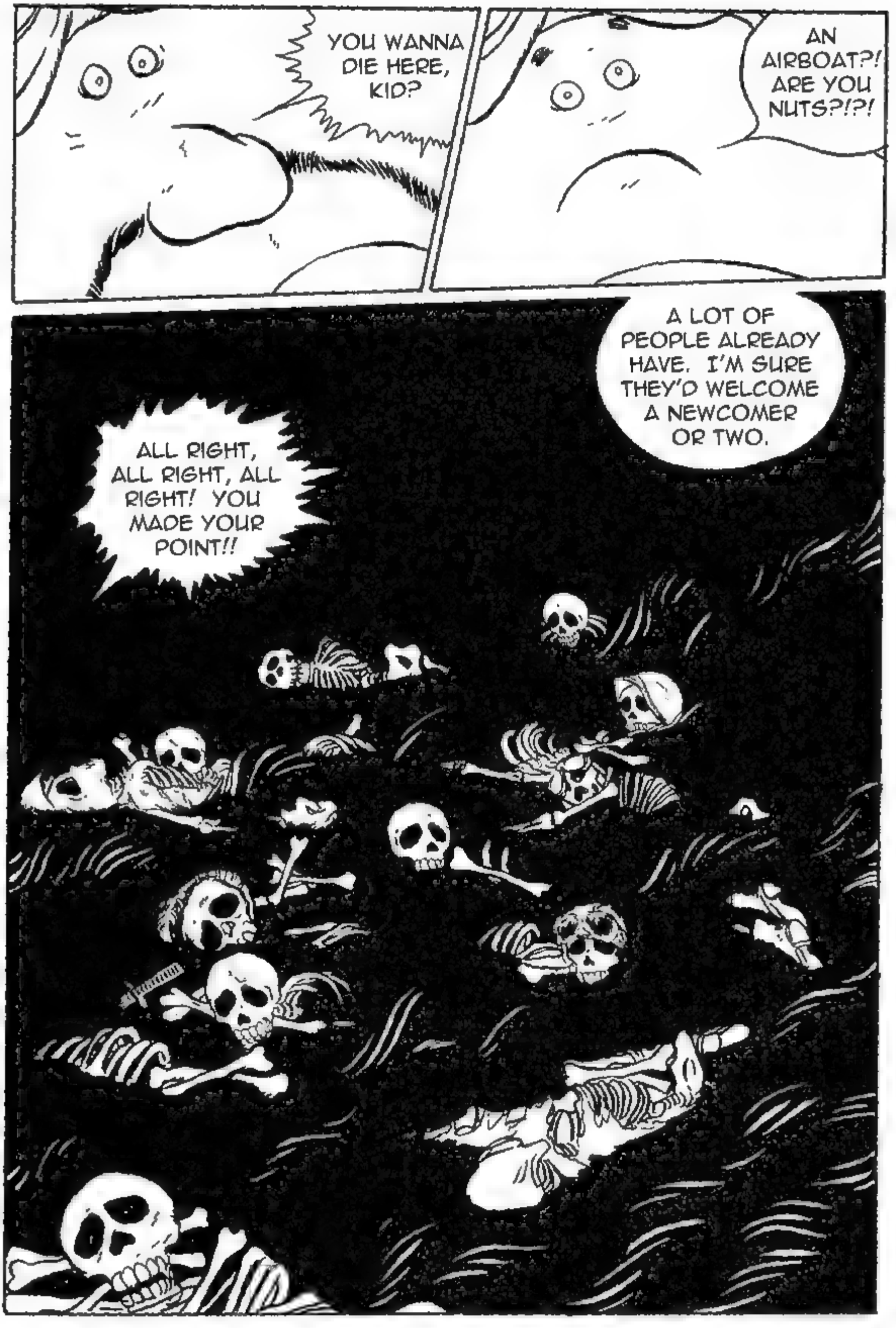
WHAT THE HELL?!?
HOT! HOT!!
JUST WHAT DID YOU SHOOT WITH THAT OLD RIFLE?
THE BULLETS THAT CAME WITH IT, AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT I HIT THERE!

IT'S THAT WOMAN!
AND SHE'S STILL ALIVE. TAKE HER. TREAT HER WOUNDS, BUT DON'T FORGET THAT SHE'S OUR PRISONER NOW.
BOSS, YOU'RE NOT PLANNING ON DOING HER LIKE THOSE REGULAR ARMY TYPES WOULD!
NO, BUT SHE OWES US FOR SHOOTING AT AND TRYING TO STARVE US. THERE'S LOTS OF MENIAL THINGS SHE CAN DO FOR US WHILE SHE'S OUR PRISONER.

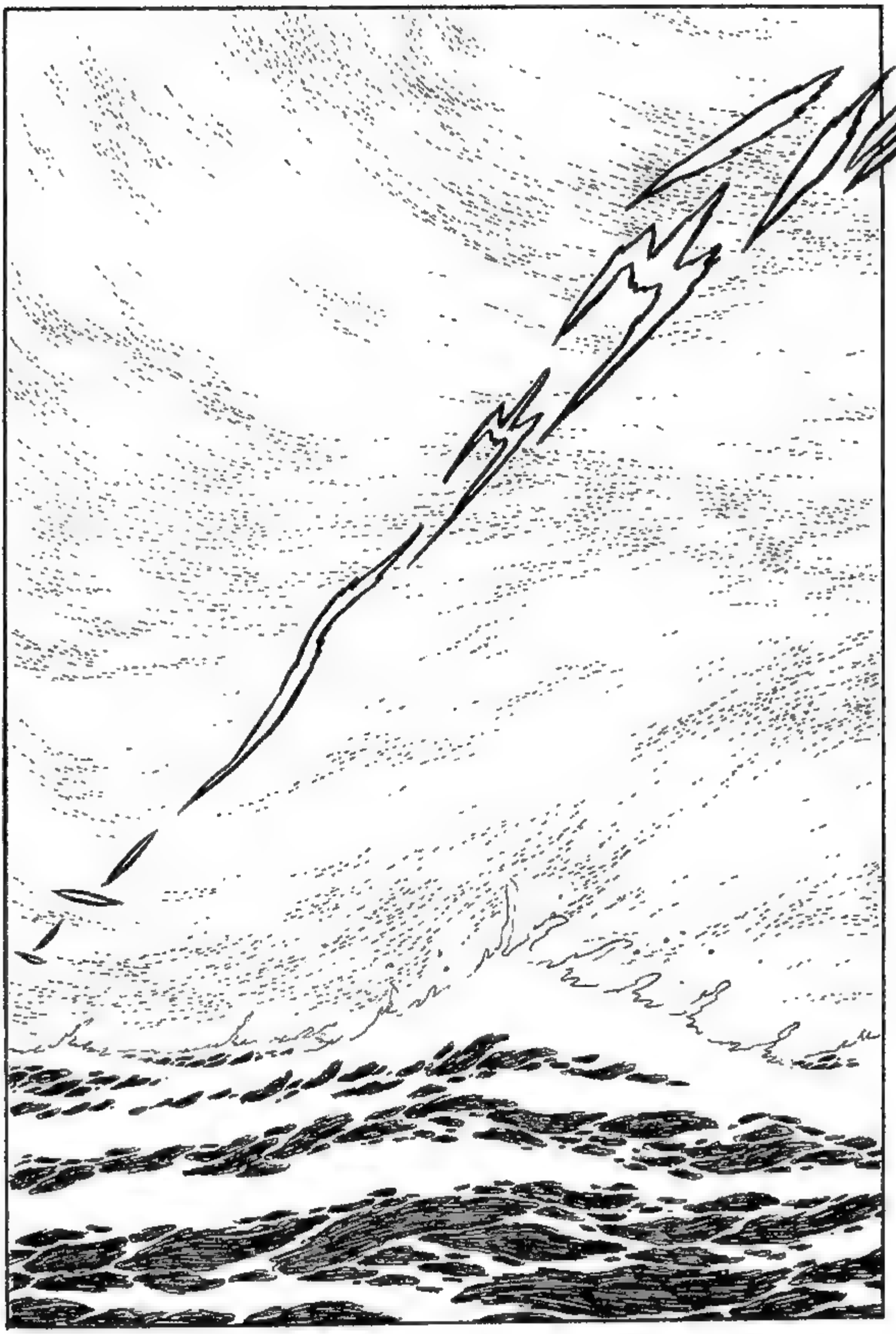
(*) THE NAVY VERSION OF THE CONSOLIDATED B-24 LIBERATOR, THE PB4Y-1. IT LOOKED ALMOST IDENTICAL TO ITS USAAF COUNTERPART BUT WAS PAINTED IN U.S. NAVY COLORS. IT WAS USED BOTH AS AN ANTI-SHIP AND ANTI-SUB PATROL CRAFT (HENCE THE TORPEDOES) AND AS A TRANSPORT.

ELECTRIC BOAT No. 13 (PART 2 OF 2)




YOU WANNA DIE HERE, KID?
AN AIRBOAT?! ARE YOU NUTS?!?!
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT! YOU MADE YOUR POINT!!
A LOT OF PEOPLE ALREADY HAVE. I'M SURE THEY'D WELCOME A NEWCOMER OR TWO.

ELECTRIC BOAT No. 13 (PART 2 OF 2)



THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH THE NUMBER 13, SO PIPE DOWN!

13

YEAH! IT'S A WESTERN THING. RIGHT!*

NOTE:
IN JAPAN THE NUMBER FOUR IS CONSIDERED UNLUCKY, SINCE THE JAPANESE WORD FOR "FOUR" (SHI) IS A HOMOPHONE (SOUNDS LIKE) OF THEIR WORD FOR "DEATH." EXPOSURE TO THE WEST ALSO BROUGHT WITH IT THE FEAR OF THE NUMBER THIRTEEN, AS IN THE URBAN LEGEND OF THE 13 STEPS. LOOK IT UP!

IT'S ALSO CONSIDERED BAD LUCK FOR A WOMAN TO BE ON BOARD A BOAT.
ALL OF YOU, SHUT UP! IF IT HELPS, REMEMBER THIS IS REALLY A CONVERTED AIRPLANE!
WE JUST FLY ON WATER, NOT AIR!
ALL THE OTHER PROBLEMS WE GOT AND THEY GOTTA GO SPOOKY!
BOSS! AIRPLANE CLOSING!
THIS IS NOT GOOD.

127 (*) THE BELL P-39 AIRACOBRA, ONE OF THE MORE NOTABLE AMERICAN FIGHTERS AT THE START OF THE WAR. IT HAD A VERY UNIQUE LOOK AS YOU CAN SEE IN MATSUMOTO'S ARTWORK ABOVE WHICH MADE IT VERY EASY TO IDENTIFY.

HE'S MAKING ANOTHER PASS!

NO GOOD, BOSS! HE'S FOLLOWING US IN! HE WANTS US ANY WAY HE CAN GET US!

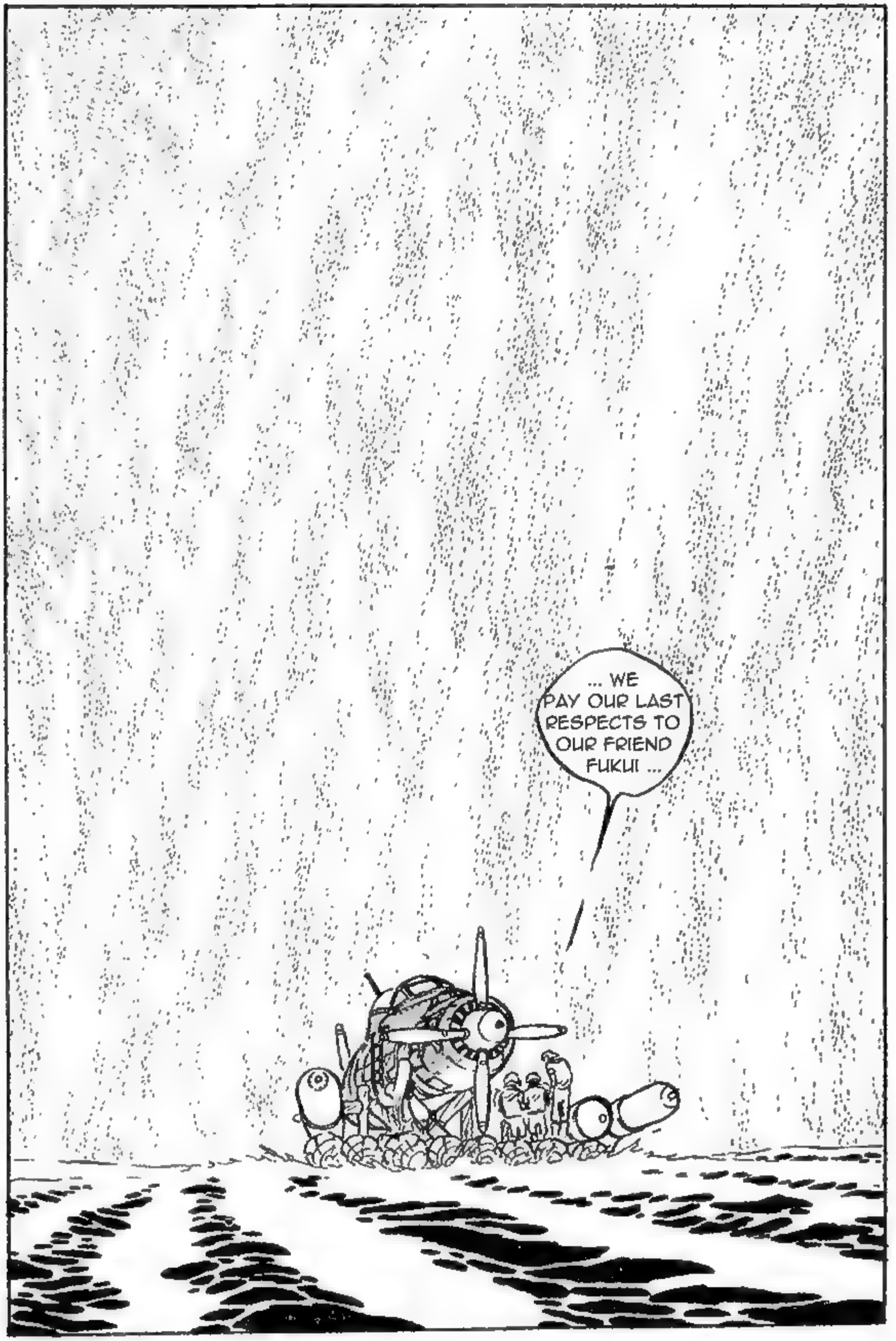
YOU MISSED US! YOU MISSED US! NOW KISS OUR ASS AND LOSE US!!

NO ...

FUKUI?

FUKUI!!

ELECTRIC BOAT No. 13 (PART 2 OF 2)



YOU DIED ON THE SEA SO WE'RE BURYING YOU AT SEA, FUKUI.

THANK THE GODS FOR ALL THIS FOG.

I'M GONNA MISS YOU ALWAYS BEING RIGHT WHEN I WAS WRONG.

I FLEW WITH YOU FOR A LONG TIME. NOW I CAN'T ANYMORE.

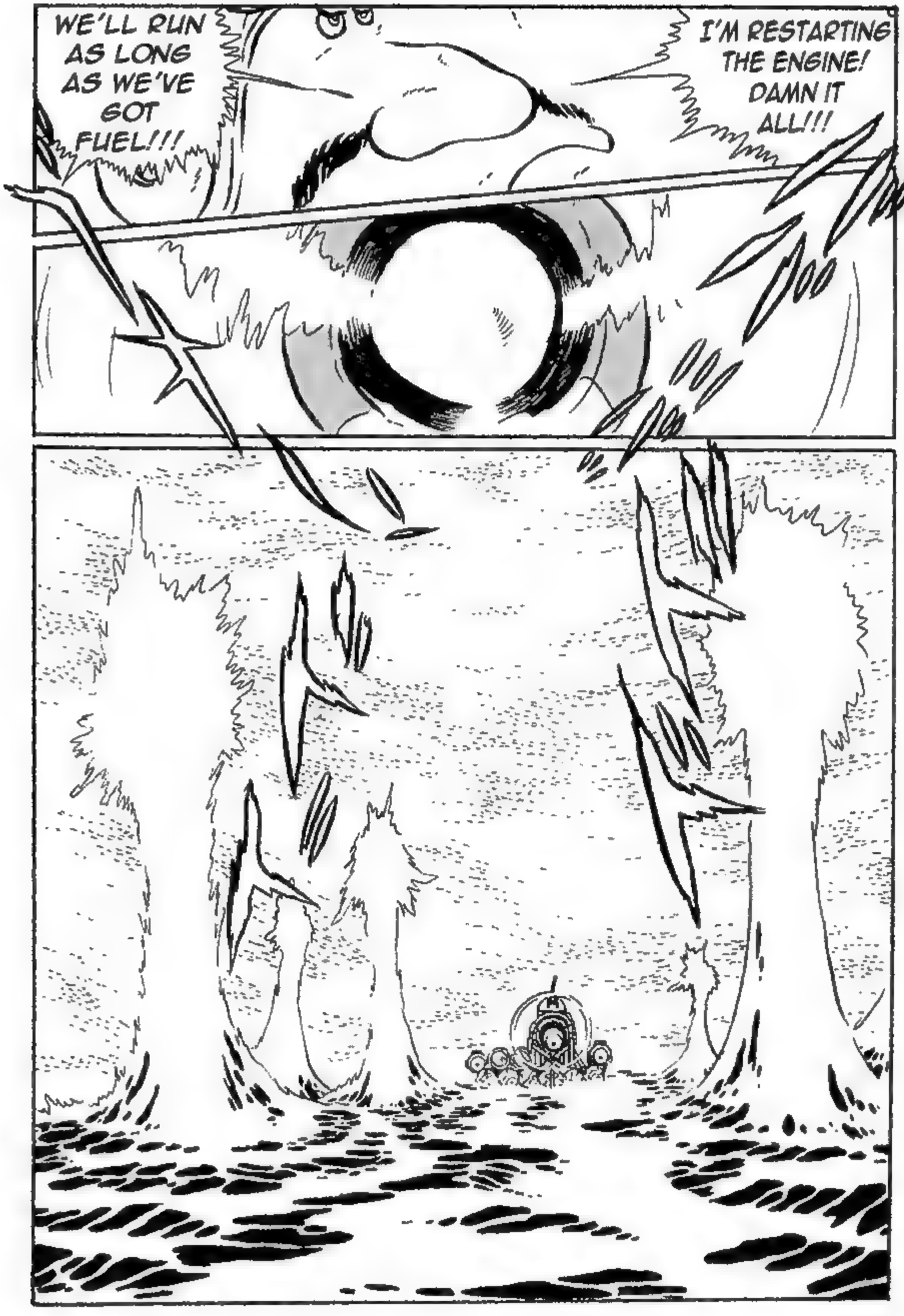
YOUR BODY MAY GO BELOW, BUT YOUR SPIRIT WILL ASCEND TO ... TO ...

NOW YOU'VE FLOWN ON WITHOUT US, FUKUI. TO HOME, PERHAPS?

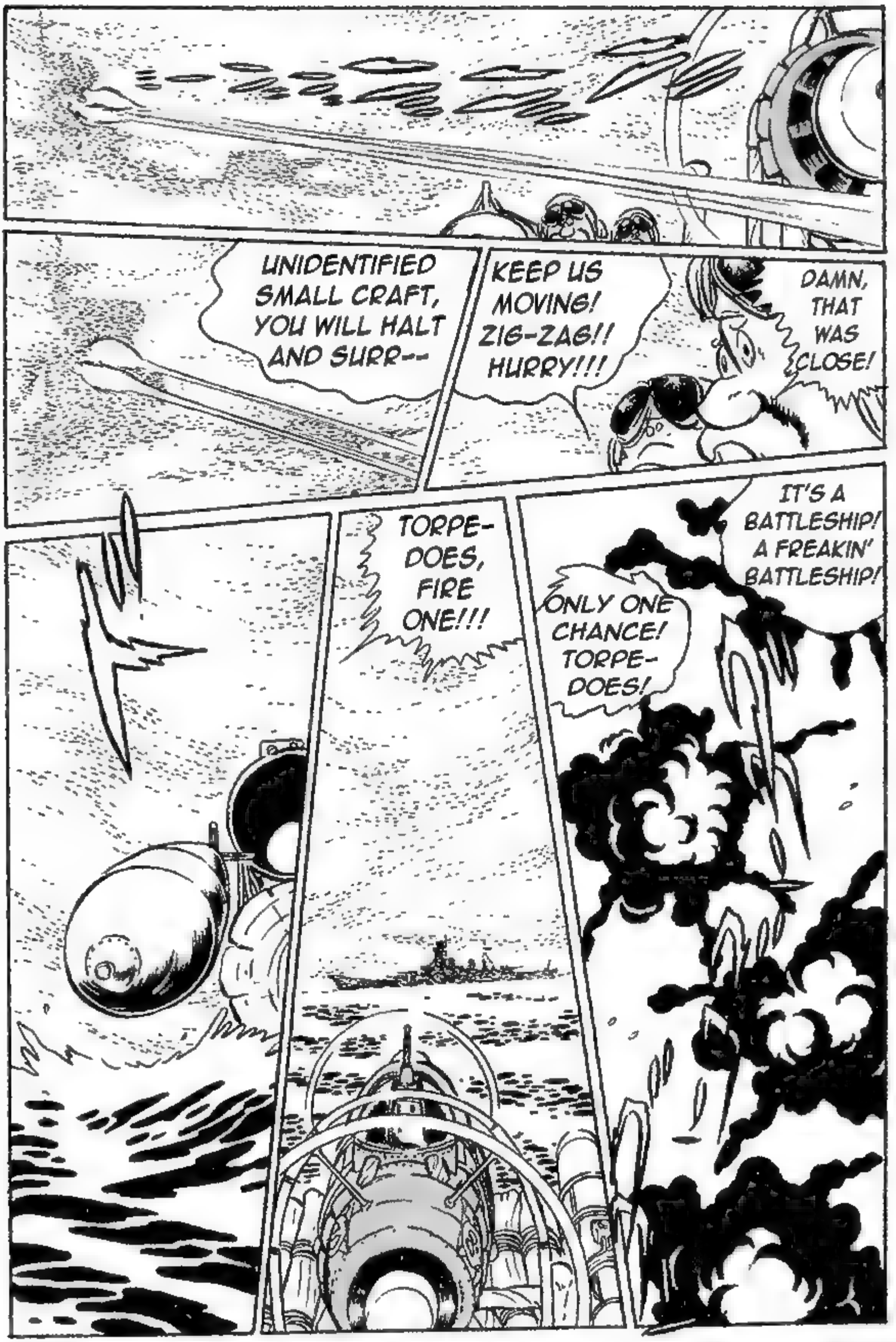
I GUESS SOME WOMEN ARE LIKE THAT, REGARDLESS OF IF THEY'RE YELLOW OR WHITE.

HEY .... SHE'S CRYING TOO.

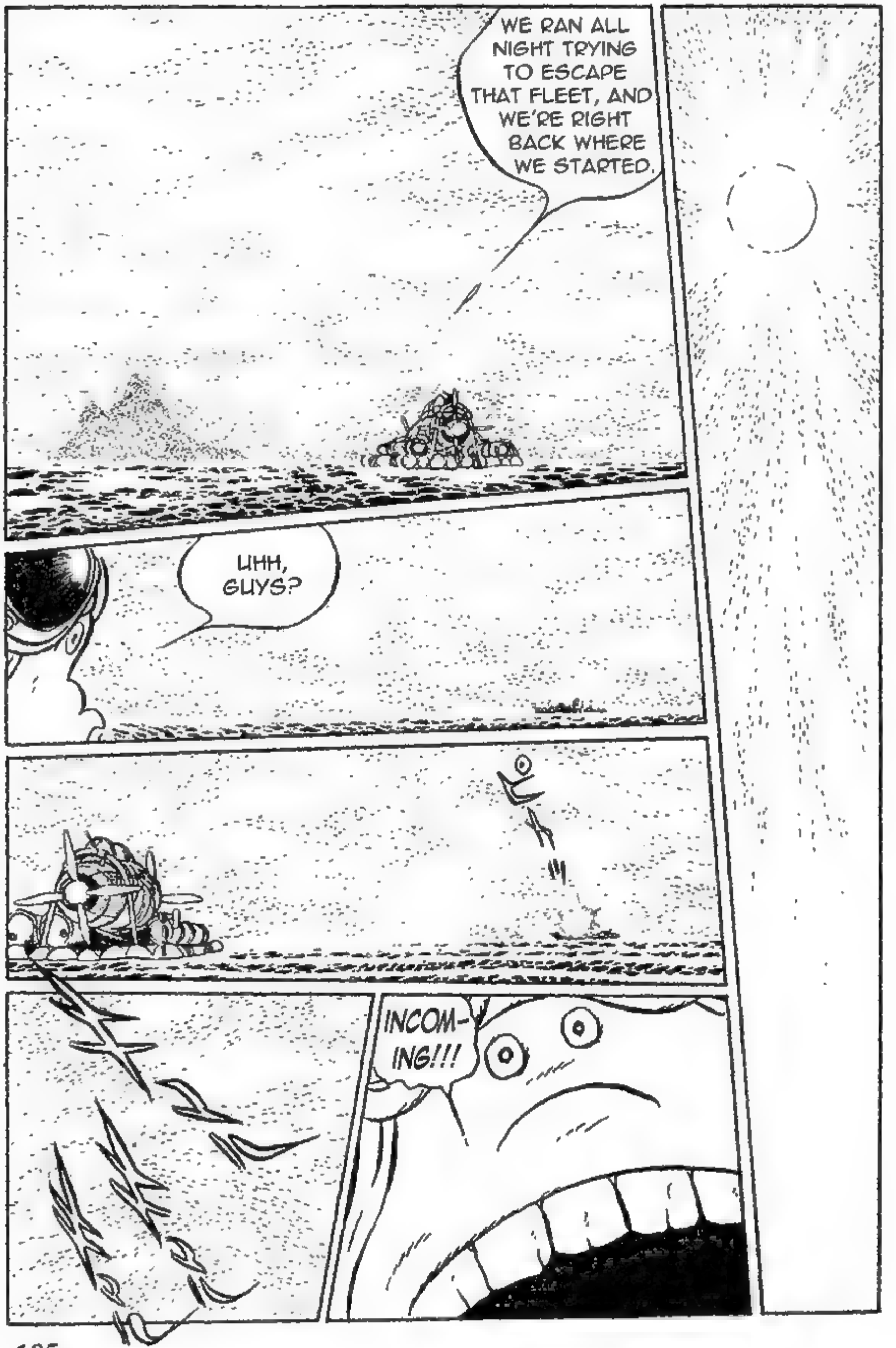
ELECTRIC BOAT No. 13 (PART 2 OF 2)


WE'LL RUN AS LONG AS WE'VE GOT FUEL!!!
I'M RESTARTING THE ENGINE! DAMN IT ALL!!!

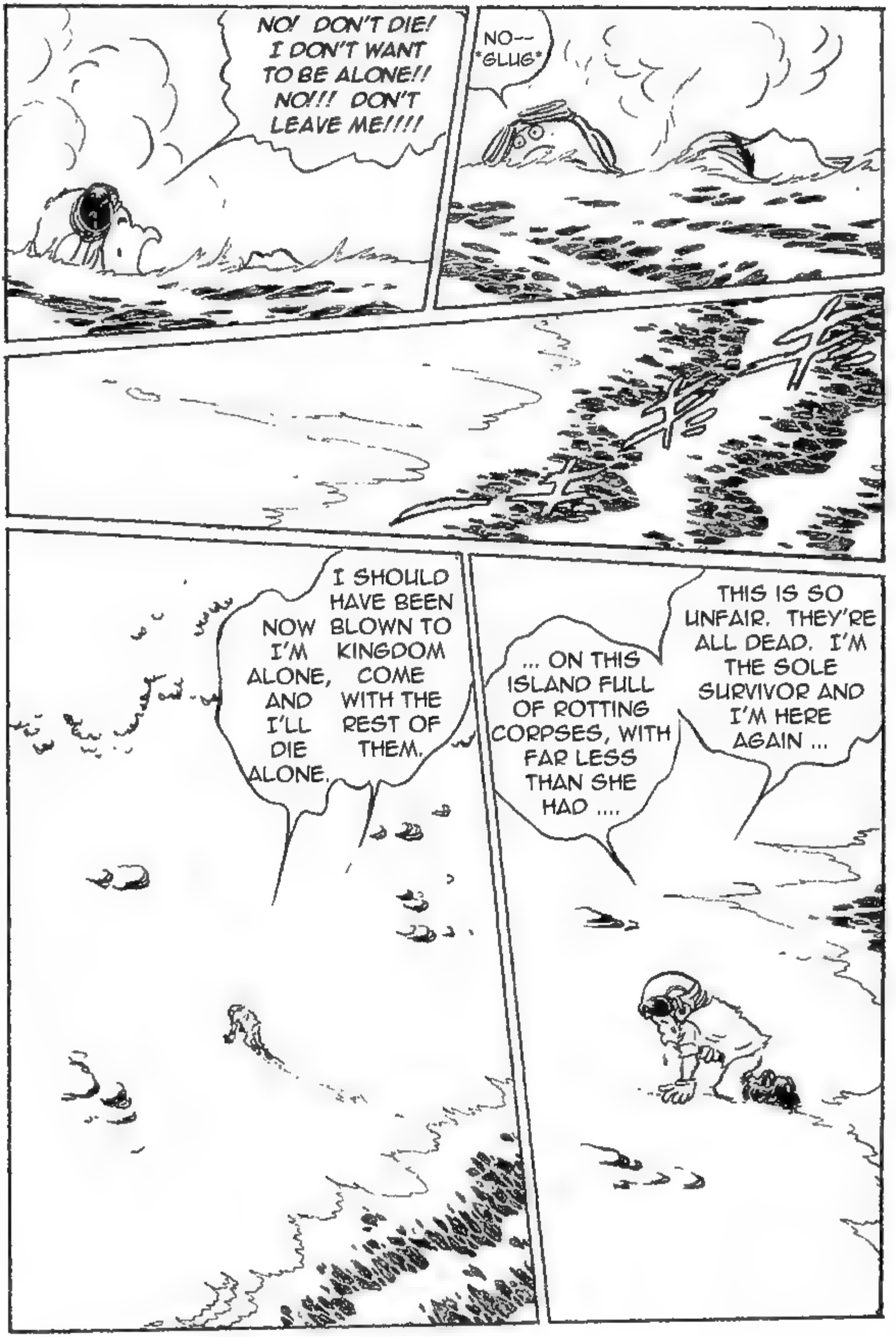
ELECTRIC BOAT No. 13 (PART 2 OF 2)



WE GOT A DES-TROYER
WE GOT IT! I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
WE MISSED THE BATTLESHIP


WE RAN ALL NIGHT TRYING TO ESCAPE THAT FLEET, AND WE'RE RIGHT BACK WHERE WE STARTED.
UHH, GUYS?
INCOM-ING!!!

ELECTRIC BOAT No. 13 (PART 2 OF 2)



THE NEXT TIME HUMANS VISITED THAT PLACE, THEY FOUND NOTHING BUT CORPSES, WRECKS, AND THE FIREFLIES THAT STILL LIT THE NIGHT.

IT WAS A NAMELESS, LONELY LITTLE ISLAND OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE, LIKE SO MANY FOUND AND LOST AGAIN DURING THE WAR ....

ONLY WHEN A RARE SPECIES OF LONG-NECKED CROW GOT THERE VIA DRIFTING FLOTSAM DID ANY OTHER LIFE COME TO THAT LONELY LITTLE ISLAND.*

IT IS IRONIC TO THINK THAT CROWS COULD LIVE WHERE MEN COULD NOT.

ENDE

(*) MATSUMOTO IS REFERENCING DARWIN'S FAMOUS STUDY OF THE GALPAGOS ISLANDS WHILE WRITING HIS SEMINIAL WORK ON THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES.

ELECTRIC BOAT No. 13 (PART 2 OF 2)

(Published in Big Comic Original, December 20, 1977 issue and January 5, 1978 issue)

MANDELISMS

And there you have it -- "Electric Boat No 13," as inventive and complex a tale as only Matsumoto could make it It's "survival of the fittest" in true Darwin fashion but with an odd wartime twist or four courtesy of Matsumoto's fertile imagination We also get to see his preferred plot trifecta of service, sex, and the supernatural at work Only the service part is overt, the supernatural is implied at times but ultimately gives way to stark and sometimes unexpectedly deadly reality, and the sex well, there's no sex per se but there is a naked white woman taken prisoner by the Japanese Given the wartime record of the brutal treatment of such by Japanese soldiers during the war I think it's notable that Matsumoto has his characters establish early on after said woman is finally captured that they're not going to abuse or assult her They're going to treat her as a menial, yes, and that's understandable given the context (even if you don't approve) but that's as far as they go As I said it's notable It's also notable that she dies along with most of the rest of them at tale's end for no other reason than her captivity puts her in a position where she gets killed, and I'll be touching on that again later.

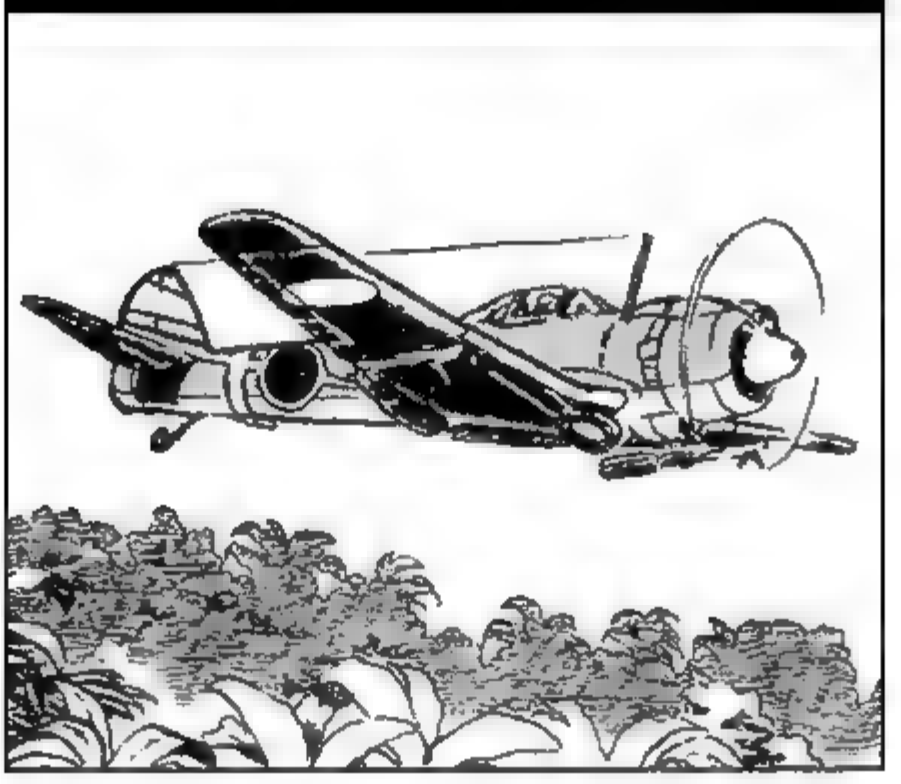
The featured aircraft in this tale is the Bell P-39 Airacobra, which was the main U S Army Air Force fighter in the Pacific at the start of the war there and remained in service in various capacities for the rest of the war P-39 equipped squadrons saw service in both the Guadalcanal and New Guinea campaigns and it appears to be in that general area where this tale takes place, given the lone "South Seas" reference in the original Japanese text I can't pin it more definitely than that given the limitations of Google Translate AI at this time but maybe some of you can do better.

And now back to the captivity and eventual death of the lone white woman in this tale It's time to re-check our running tally on the number of women who live, die, and live but suffer significant abuse or are raped in The Cockpit At the end of Volume 5 our count was at 9 died, 5 lived, and 7 lived but were abused or raped or both before tale's end Let's add Volume 6's count to that Erna Stavener lives in "Seven Knights " (and has consensual sex with the main male character but that's another issue for another day, nudge nudge!), Myoko Kuroda is killed in the bombing of Kawashirokota Airfield in "The Whirring of the Grim Reaper's Wings," both of the wives of the heroes in "The Twin Engined Knight" live, Marlena the physicist dies when the plane in which she is riding is shot down by the British in "Stratospheric Air Current" (but she wanted to die per the story, hmmm ...), and there were no women in "Bayonet Battle." That brings our running tally up to 11-8-7 Now for Volume 7 to that tally. The two women in "The Mountain Where Revenge Was Buried" are just there for window dressing and don't even figure in the story proper but both live, so we'll add them too No women at all in "Annihilation Line Blitzkrieg, none in "Stuka at Night," the native woman Metamune dies as the victim of a curse in "The Flower of the Sea," and the lone female character in "The Plexiglass Coffin" doesn't appear until tale's end so she lives That up our running tally to 14-9-7 so far What about Volume 8 so far?

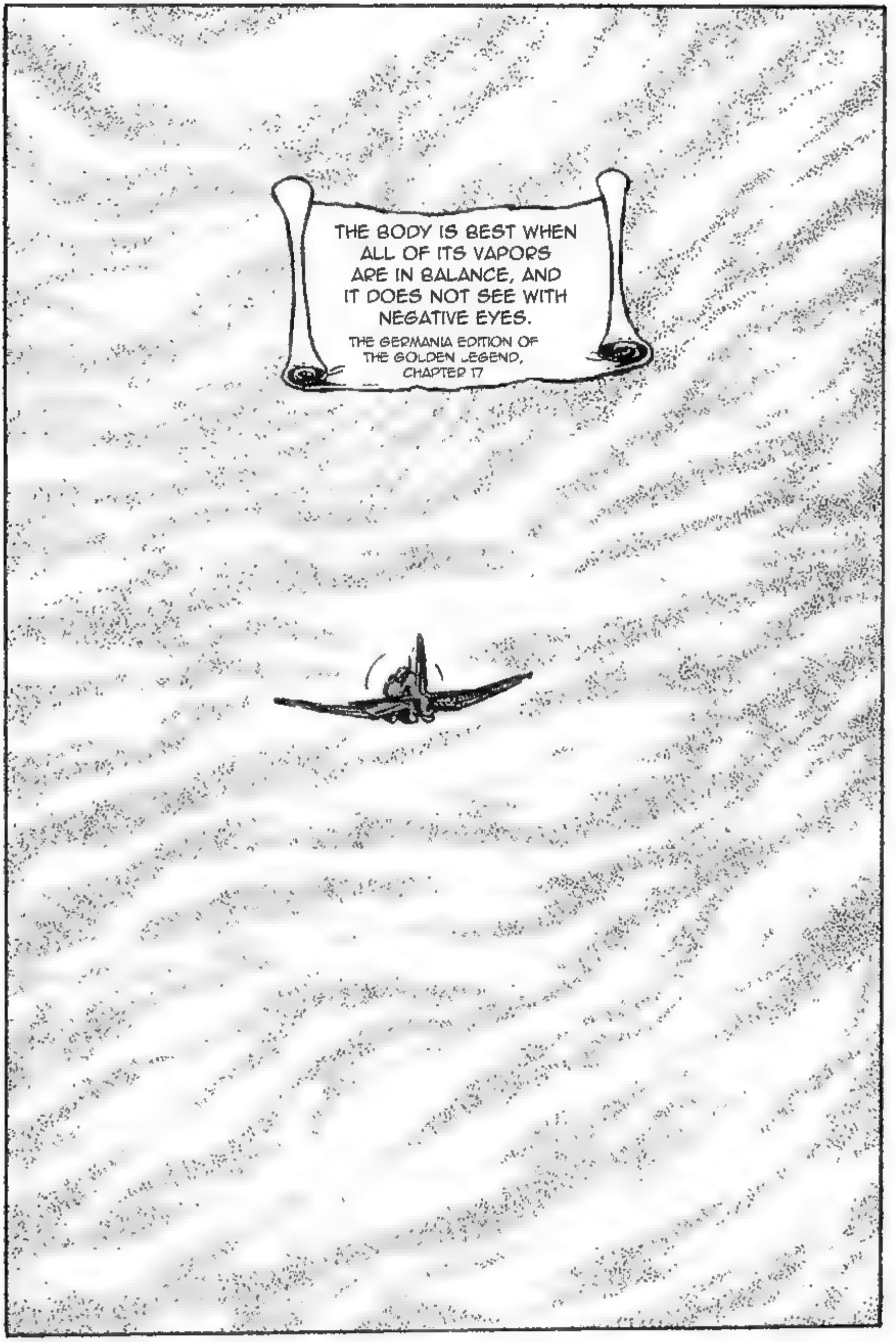
No women in "Rising Thunderbolt," no women in "Sand and Scotch," and we just found out what happened to the one in "Electric Boat No 13" I'll go ahead and tell you now that there won't be any women in the next and final tale in this volume, "The Night Mayfly," so that brings our running tally for the first eight volumes in The Cockpit up to 14-10-7 so far It'll be interesting to see what those final numbers are going to be once I'm done with the ninth and final volume in the original nine-*tankoban* release of *The Cockpit* series.

TALES FROM THE COCKPIT

THE NIGHT MAYFLY (PARTS 1 AND 2)

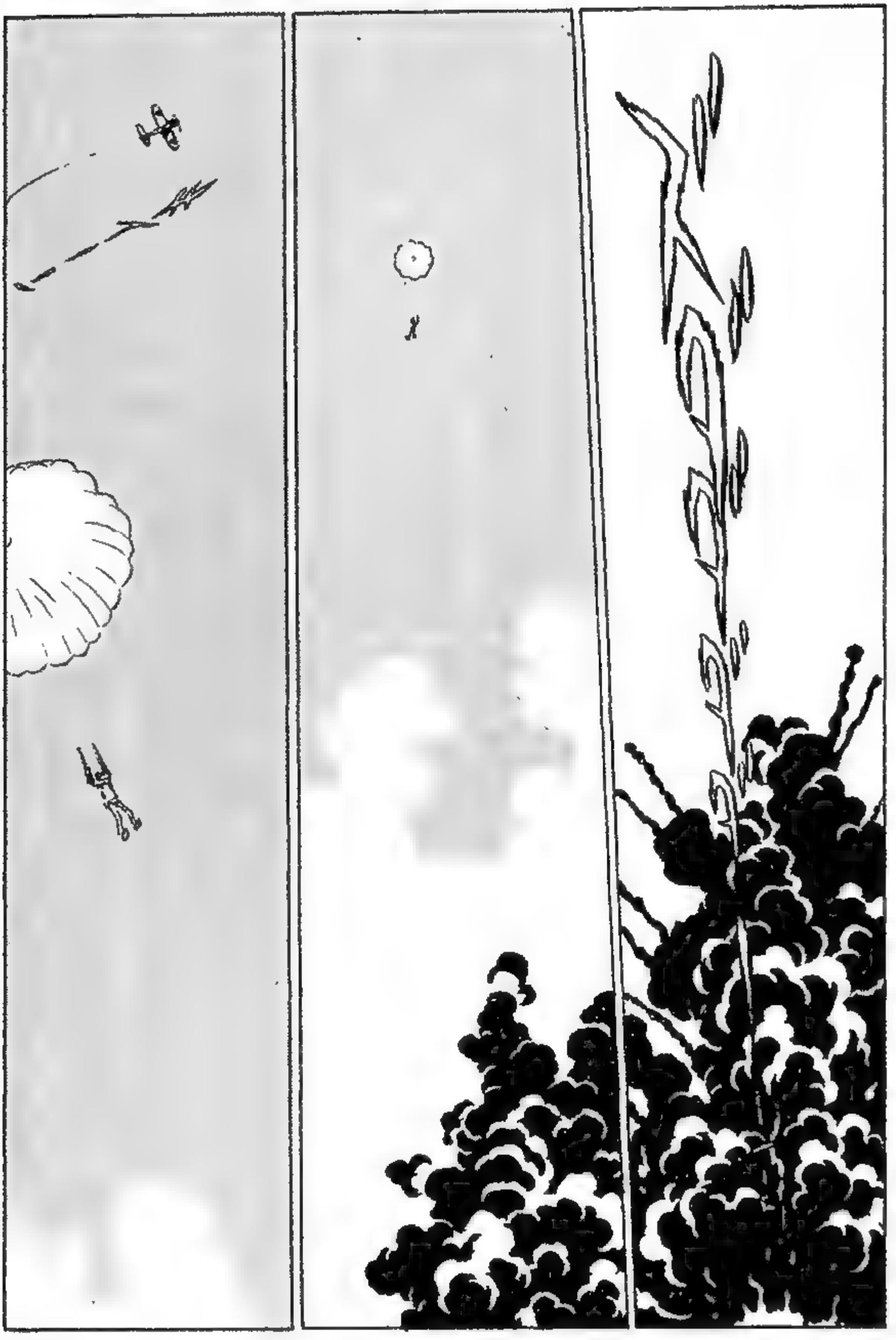


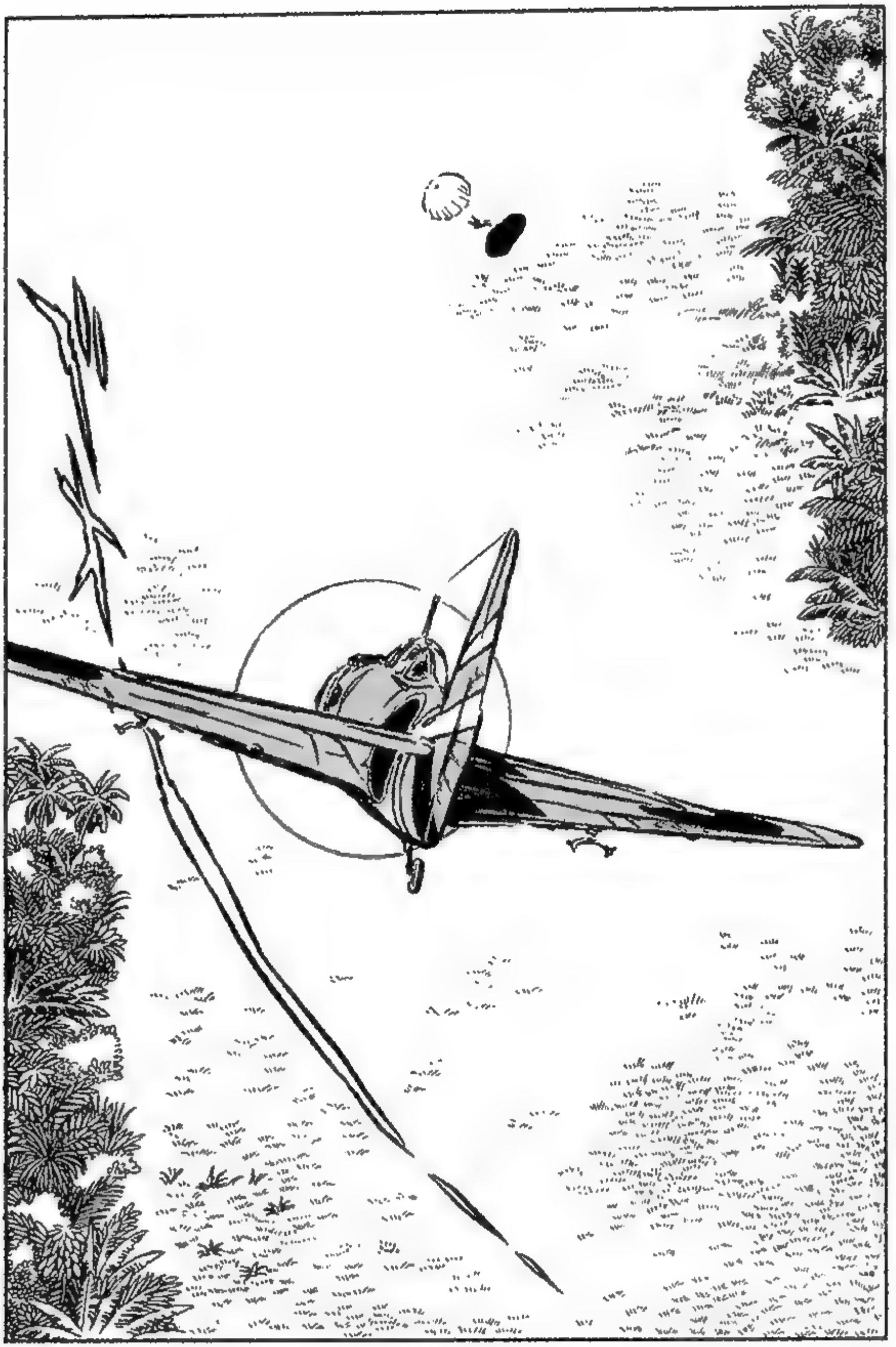
THE NIGHT MAYFLY (PART 1 OF 2)



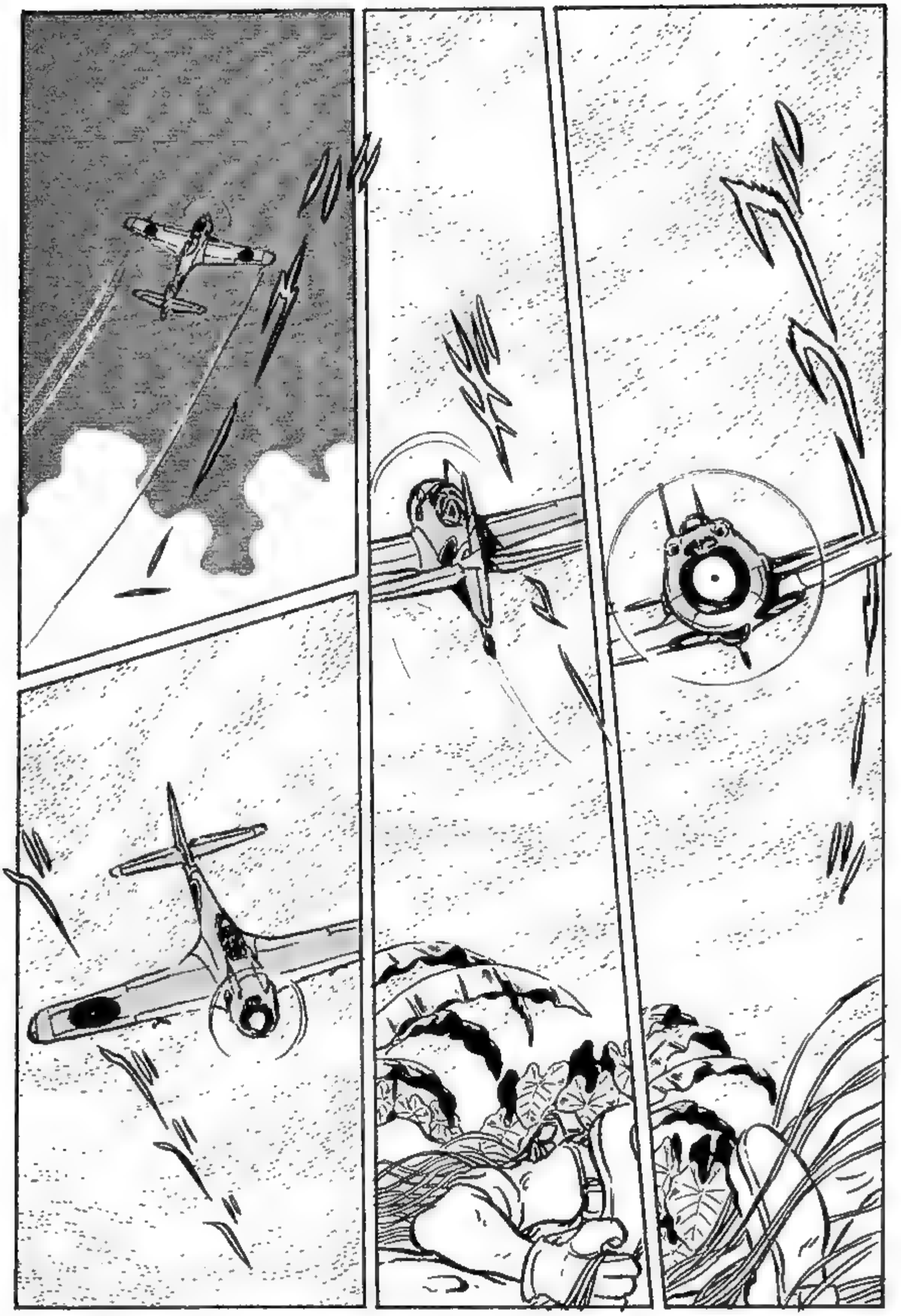
THE NIGHT MAYFLY
(PART 1 OF 2)

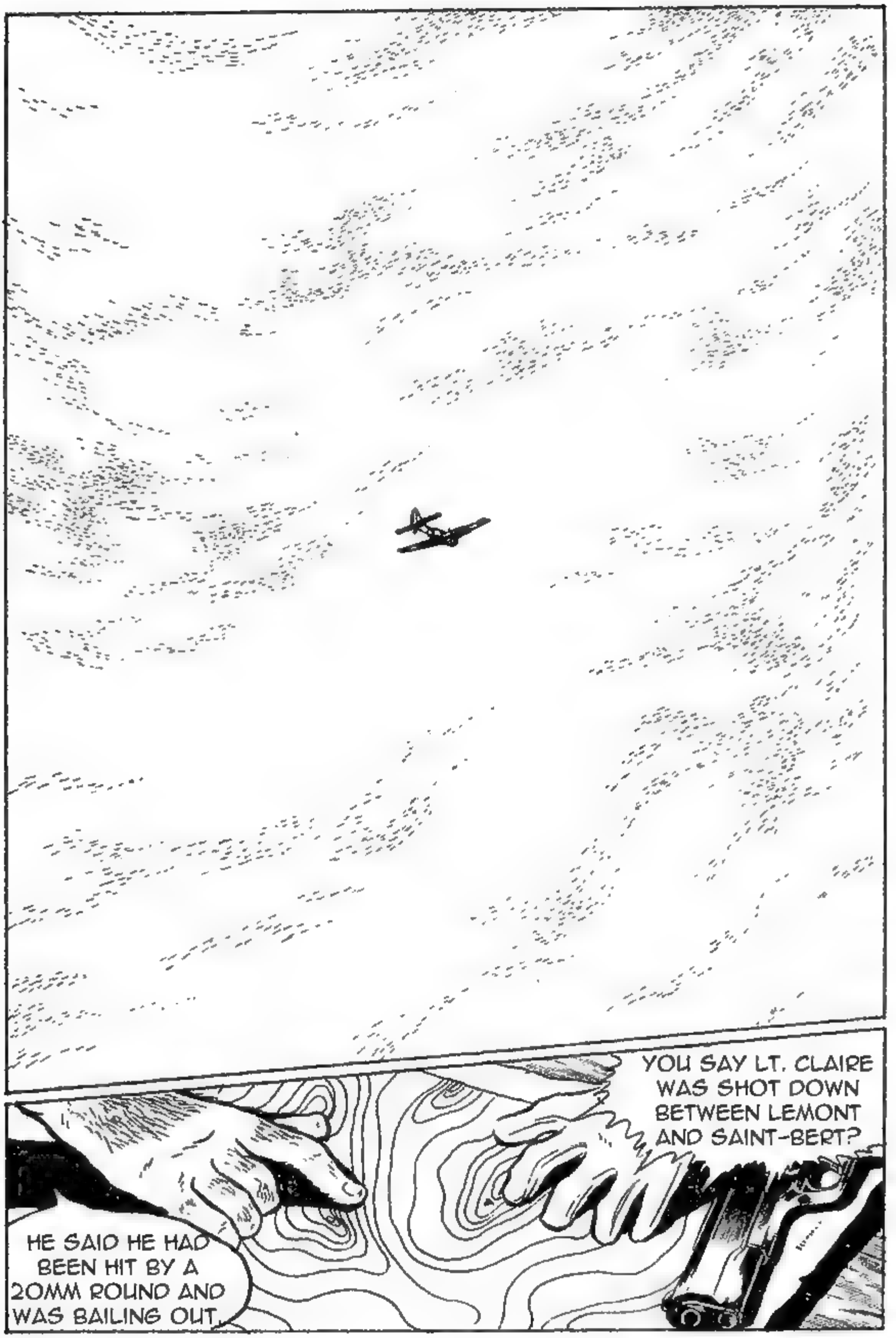
THE NIGHT MAYFLY (PART 1 OF 2)



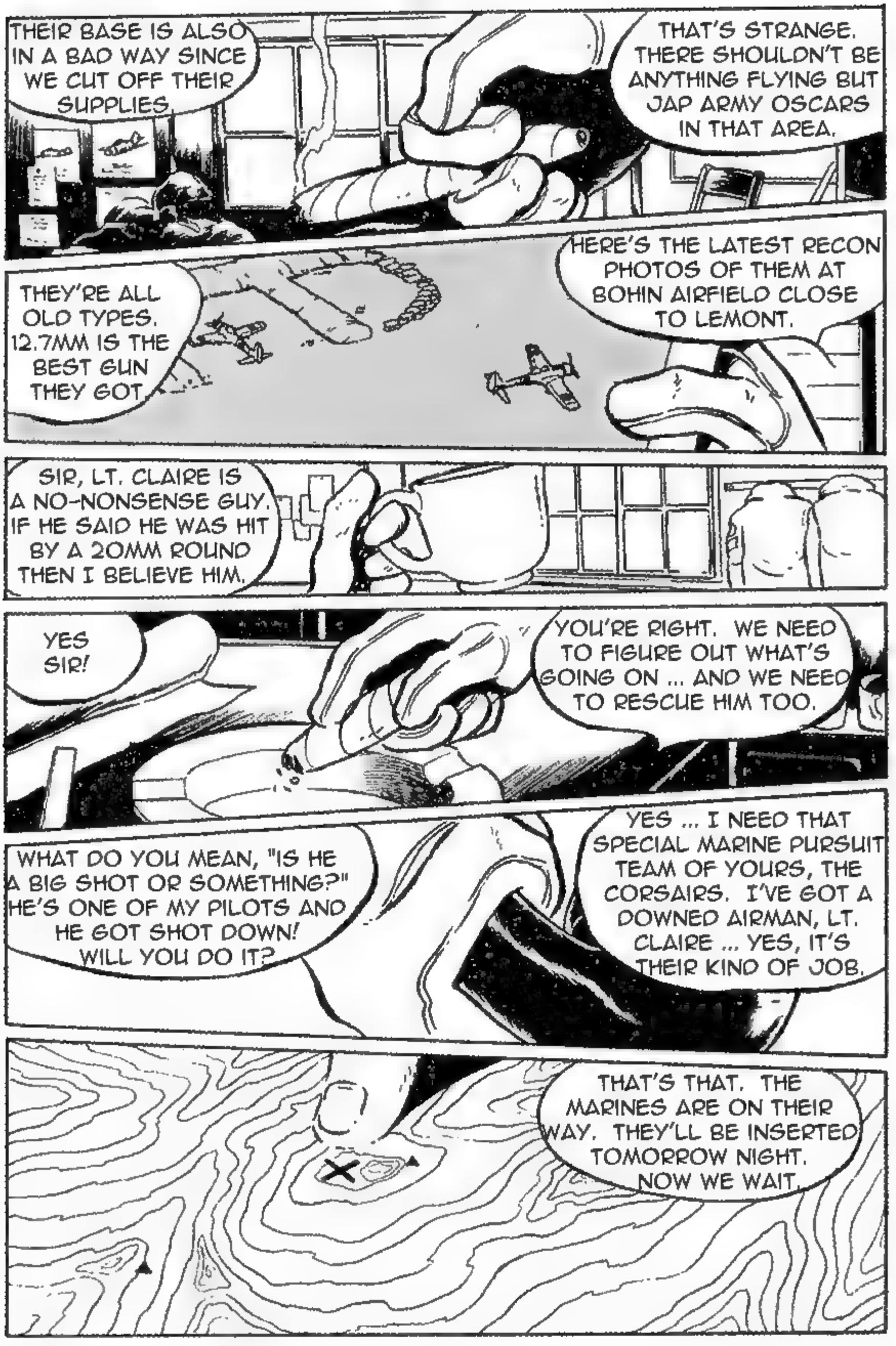


THE NIGHT MAYFLY (PART 1 OF 2)




YOU SAY LT. CLAIRE WAS SHOT DOWN BETWEEN LEMONT AND SAINT-BERT?
HE SAID HE HAD BEEN HIT BY A 20MM ROUND AND WAS BAILING OUT.

THE NIGHT MAYFLY (PART 1 OF 2)



CLAIRE'S CORSAIR HAD ITS TAIL STABILIZERS MOUNTED UP A BIT AS A TEST. IF YOU FIND ANY WRECKAGE LET ME KNOW.

ck Elevator
xperimental

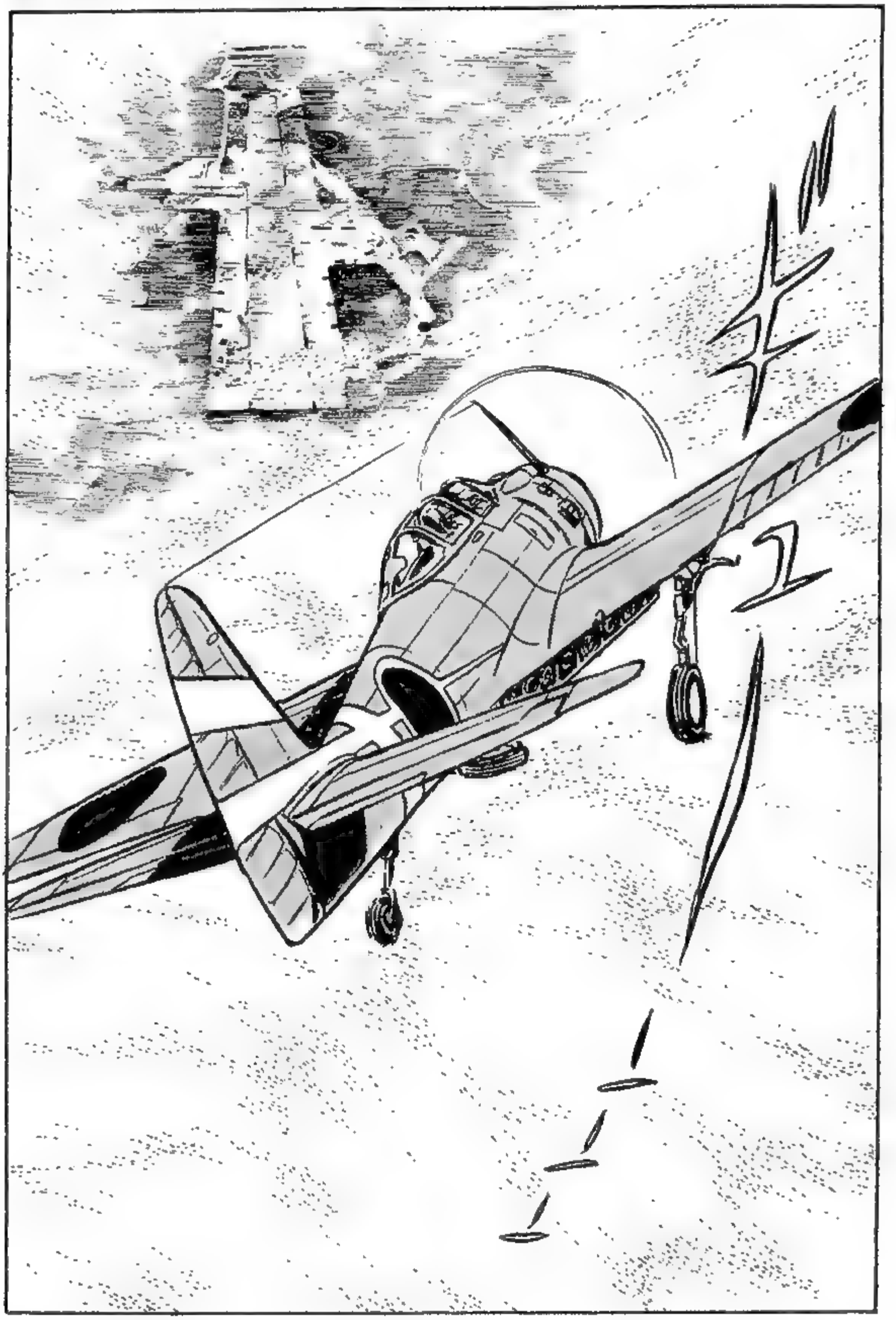
WE ALSO HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THE JAP'S NEW 20MM CANNONS.

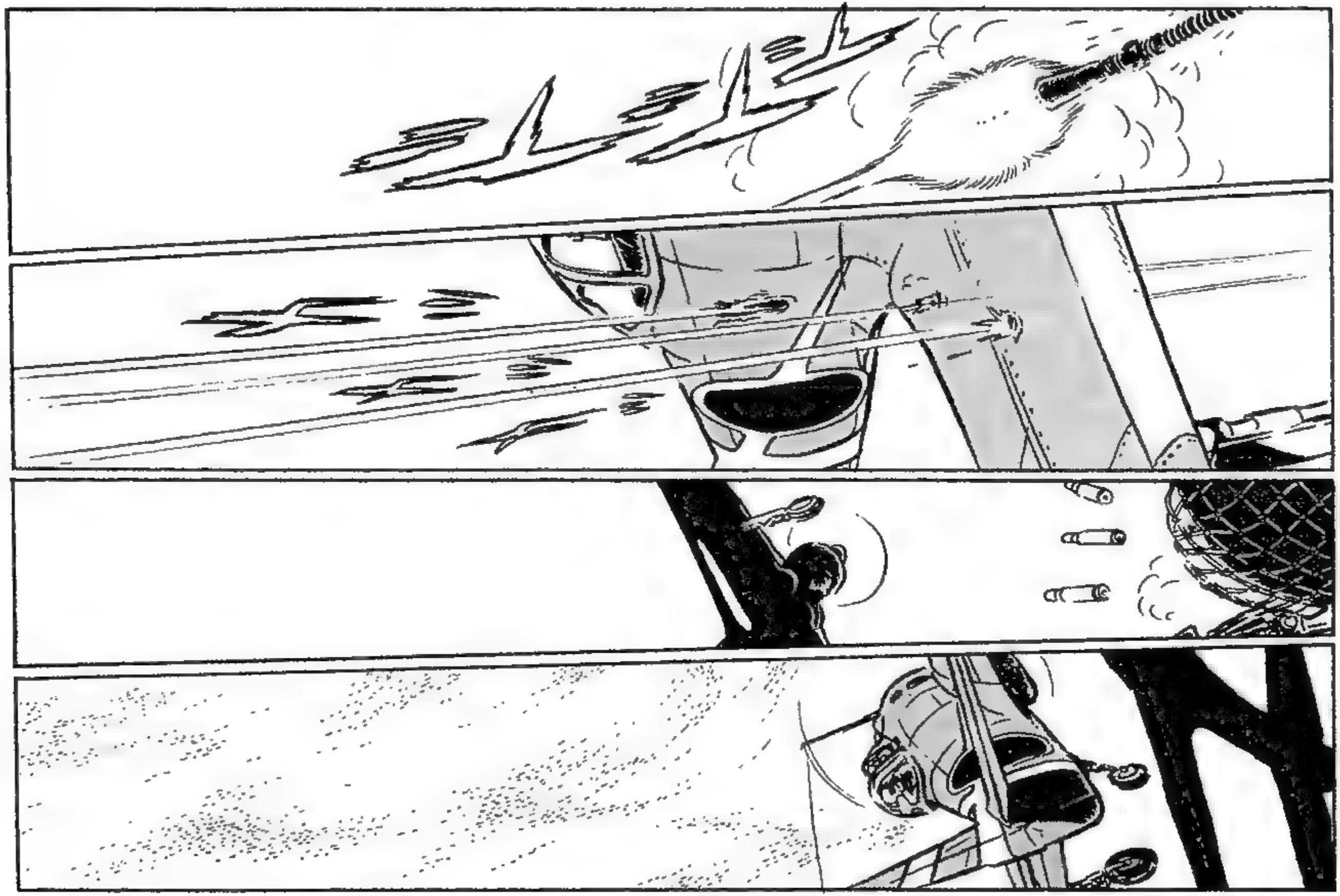
MAYBE WE'LL FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HOW HE WAS DOWNED, WHY, AND EXACTLY WITH WHAT.

IT'S A SHAME ABOUT CLAIRE. HE WAS A GOOD PILOT, AND THE END OF THE WAR WAS SO CLOSE. THAT'S WHY I WANT TO TRY TO SAVE HIM.

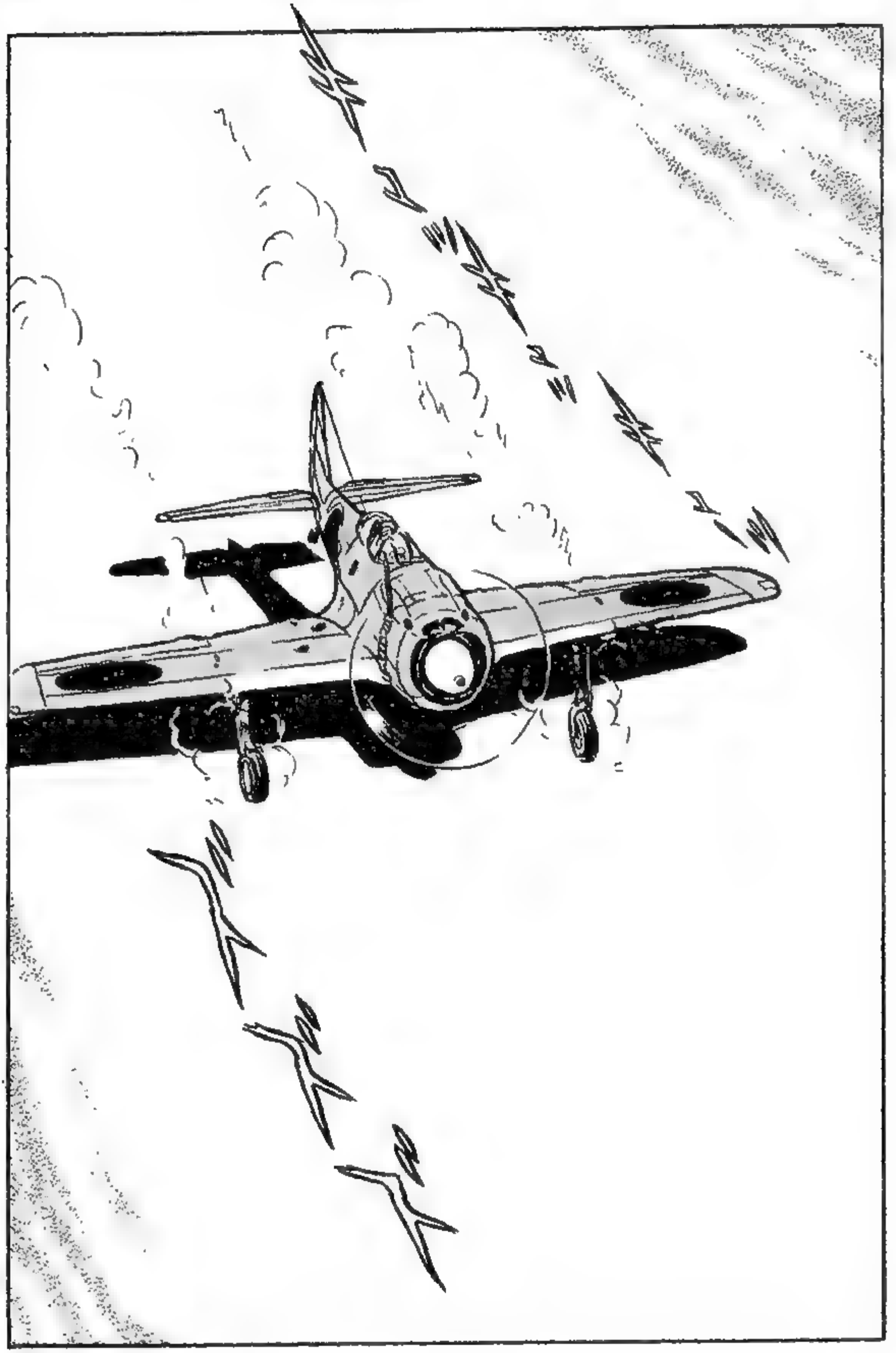
I WANT THEM. I WANT THE JAP THAT SHOT HIM DOWN, AND HIS NEW 20MM CANNONS TO BOOT.

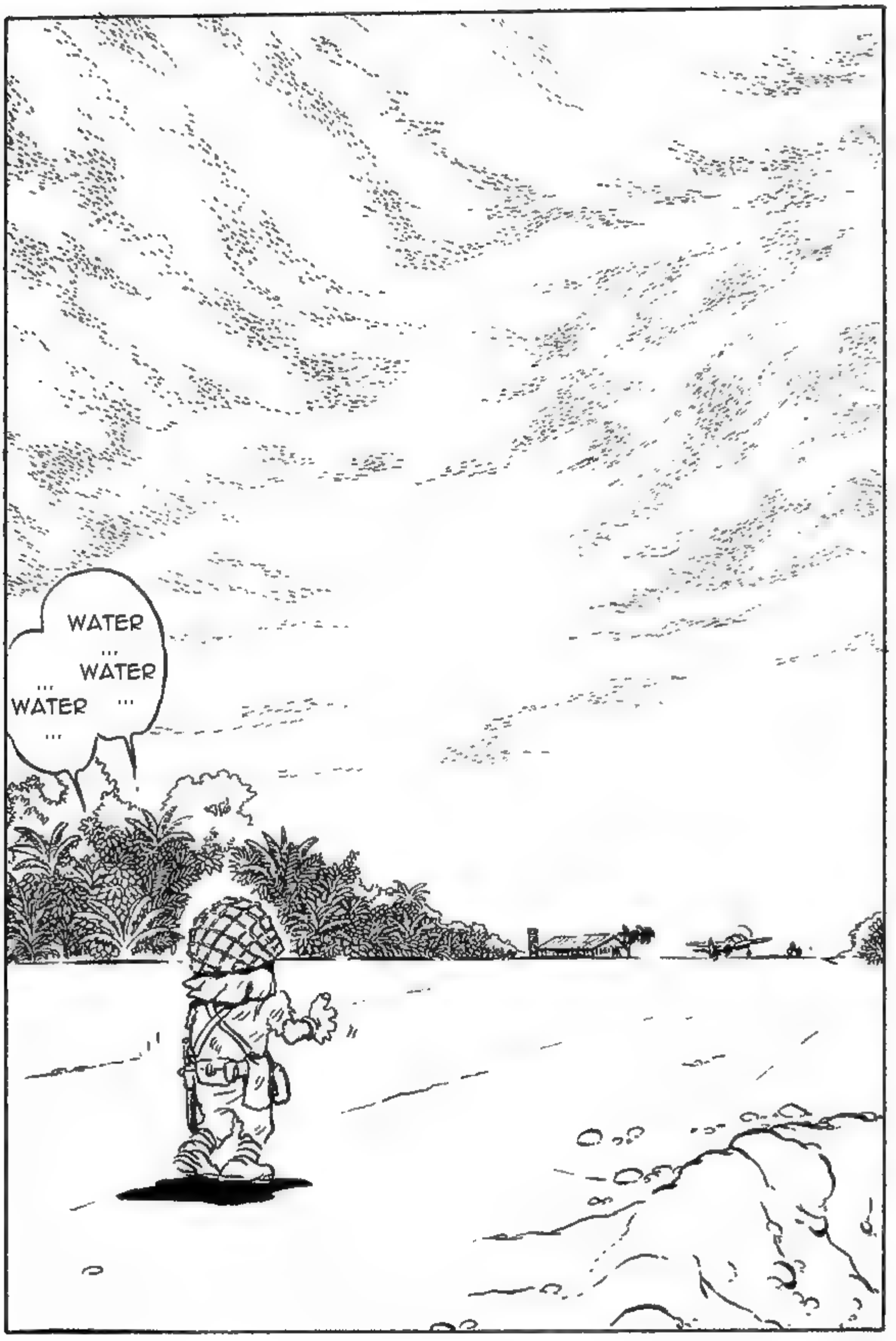
THE NIGHT MAYFLY (PART 1 OF 2)





THE NIGHT MAYFLY (PART 1 OF 2)




WATER
...
WATER
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WATER
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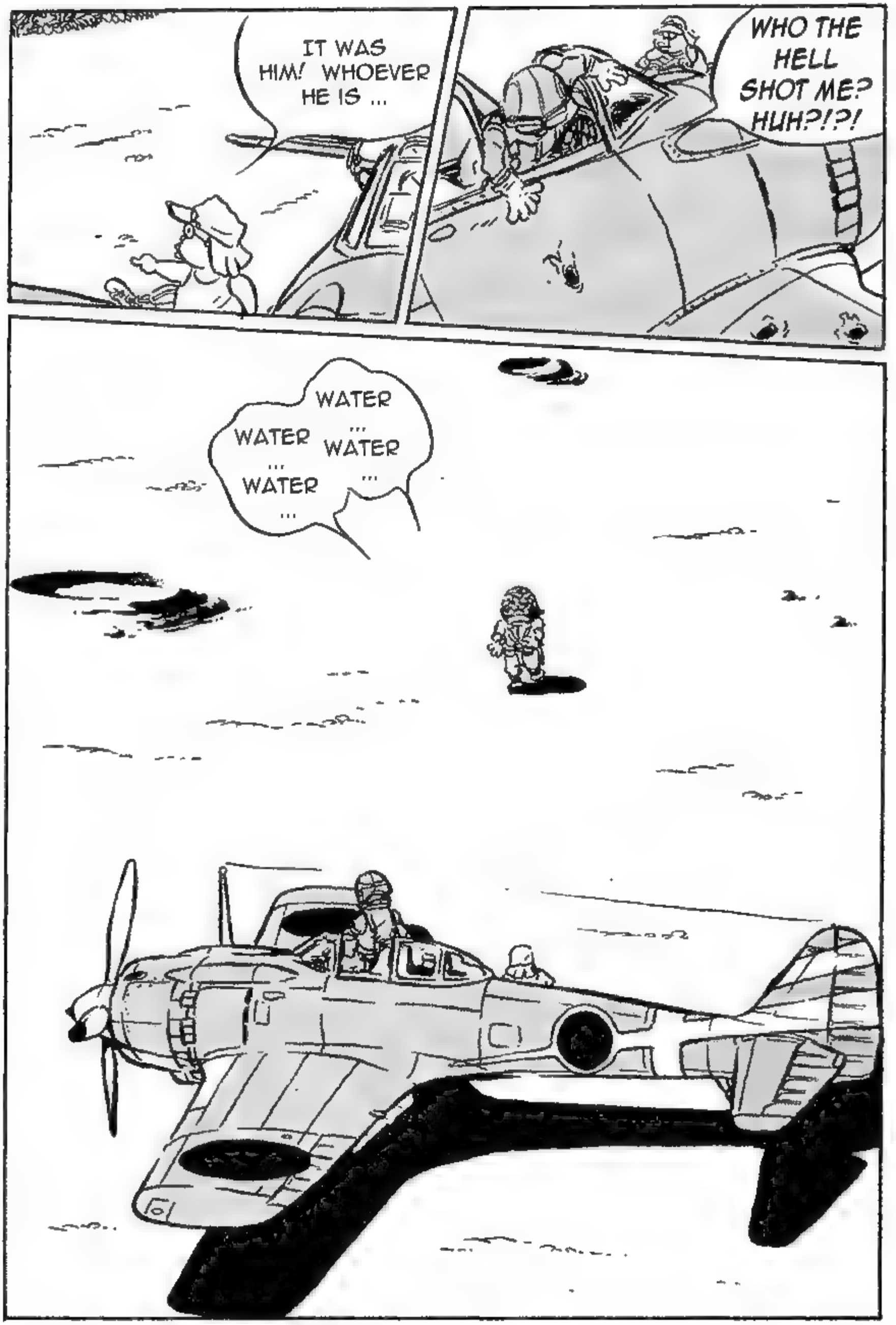
...

THE NIGHT MAYFLY (PART 1 OF 2)



WATER ... WATER ... WA ... OH! I'M SORRY ...

HEY, DUDE! YOU ALL RIGHT?

... ALL ... ALL THE WAY ... FROM SANRION ... HAD TO HOOF IT ... LAST DAY ...

... I ... I'VE BEEN ON THE MOVE ... THREE DAYS ...

GET HIM WATER!

I ... WAS IN A TRUCK ... BUT IT GOT HIT ... STRAFED BY AN AMERICAN PLANE ... ... SO THIRSTY ...

IT WAS ... THERE WERE FOUR OF US ... BUT THE OTHER THREE ... WHEN THE TRUCK ....

MUST HAVE BEEN ONE HELL OF A TRIP.

THANKS SIR.

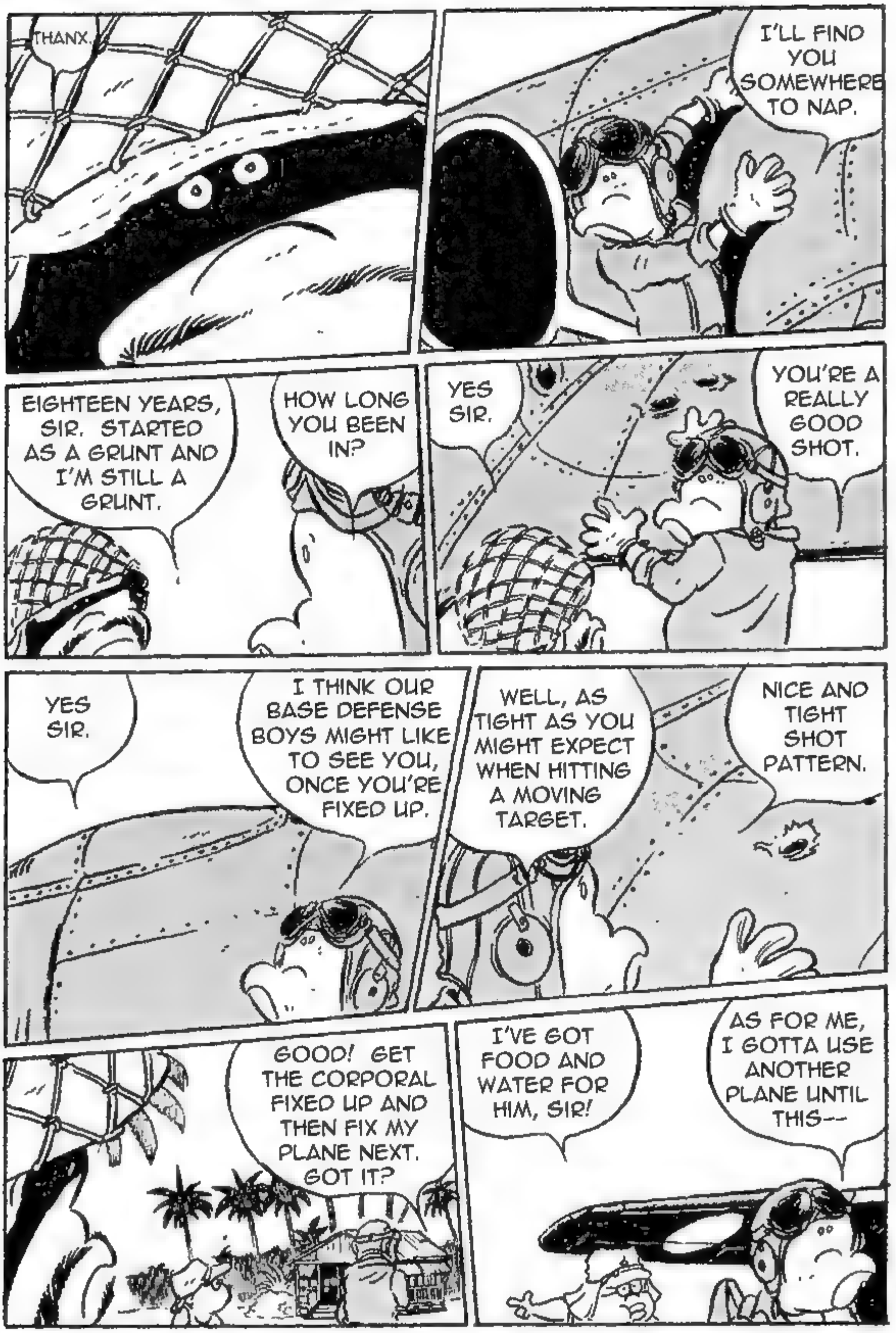
CORPORAL YAMAMORI, SIR, AT YOUR SERVICE.

YOU'RE SAFE NOW. WHAT'S YOUR NAME AND RANK?

... DO YOU KNOW WHERE I CAN FIND A BED? I'M VERY TIRED ....

AFTER I GET A DRINK, SIR ...

THE NIGHT MAYFLY (PART 1 OF 2)



I'VE ALREADY LET THE HIGHER UPS KNOW ABOUT THIS MOD.

I MODIFIED THE NOSE SO WE COULD STICK THEM IN THERE THERE'S NOT ENOUGH ROOM IN THE WINGS.

YEAH, BUT IT TOOK SOME DOING.

HEY! THAT'S NO NORMAL HAYABUSA!* YOU'VE ADDED 20MM GUNS!

YEAH, WELL I WASN'T THERE WHEN THEY FIRST DESIGNED THESE.

IT'S A GOOD IDEA. THEY SHOULD HAVE DONE IT IN THE FIRST PLACE.

THE LIMITS FORCE ME TO BE INVENTIVE. IT'S A REAL CHALLANGE KEEPING THESE OLD BIRDS GOING.

I'LL BET.

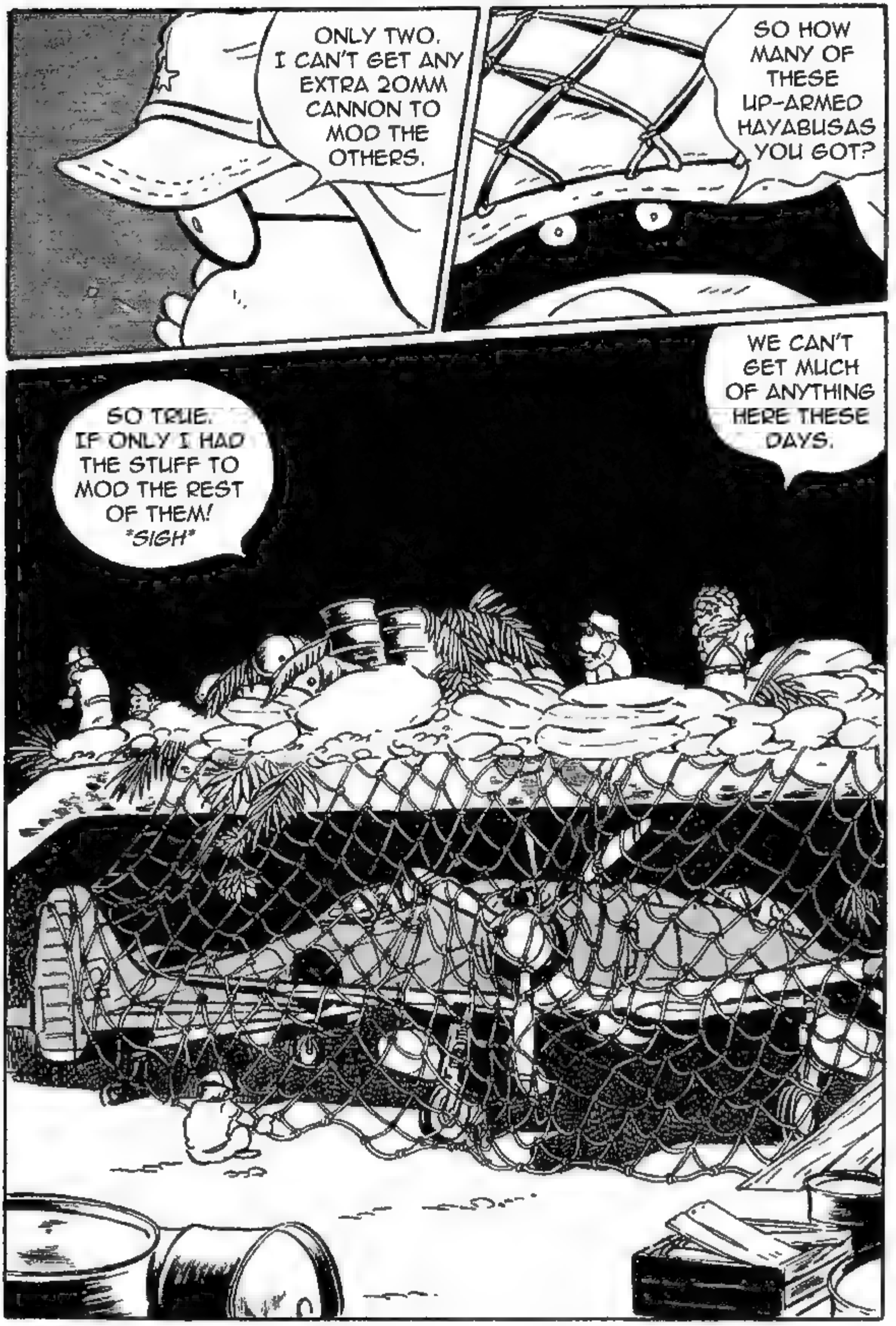
TO TELL THE TRUTH I FIND IT A CHALL-ENGE.

BUT I'M STUCK IN THE PHILI-PPINES TOO.

A GENIUS LIKE THAT STUCK OUT HERE.

(*) *HAYABUSA* - THE JAPANESE NAME FOR THE IMPERIAL ARMY AIR CORPS NAKAJIMA KI-43 FIGHTER, ALLIED CODE NAME "OSCAR"

THE NIGHT MAYFLY (PART 1 OF 2)



!!
PROBABLY THOSE FILIPINO GUERILLAS AGAIN.
AN ATTACK OF SOME KIND.
WHAT IS IT?
THE ATTACK IS ON THE FAR SIDE, AWAY FROM THEM. I THINK THEY'LL BE OKAY.
THE PLANES! YOU THINK YAMAMORI CAN HANDLE IT?
HEY, THAT'S AMERICAN SUB-MACHINE GUN FIRE. I DIDN'T THINK THE GUERILLAS HAD THOSE.
YOU'RE RIGHT. THE BEST THEY HAVE ARE SINGLE SHOT RIFLES.

MAYBE THEY'VE FIGURED OUT MY LITTLE MOD TO THOSE TWO HAYABUSAS AND WANT A CLOSER LOOK.

WHY IN THE WORLD WOULD THEY ATTACK KOJI AIRFIELD NOW?

HMMM. NOW IT SOUNDS LIKE THERE'S TWO DIFFERENT GROUPS.

JEEZUZ! THERE'S JAP SOLDIERS ALL OVER THE PLACE, AND WITH HEAVY MACHINE GUNS TO BOOT!

SHUT UP AND KEEP FIRING! WE CAN'T LET OURSELVES GET PINNED DOWN OR WE'VE HAD IT!

THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A SIMPLE RESCUE OF A DOWNED PILOT! FUCKIN' 'A'!

SOMEBODY'S STARTING A PLANE OVER THERE!!

WHAT TH—?!

YES SIR!!!

STOP THEM BEFORE THEY WRECK YOUR PLANES!

YAMANAKA! WHAT FOOL IS TRYING TO FLY IN A FUCKIN' FIREFIGHT?!

OH ...

OUR PILOTS KNOW THAT IF THE AIRFIELD IS EVER ATTA ...

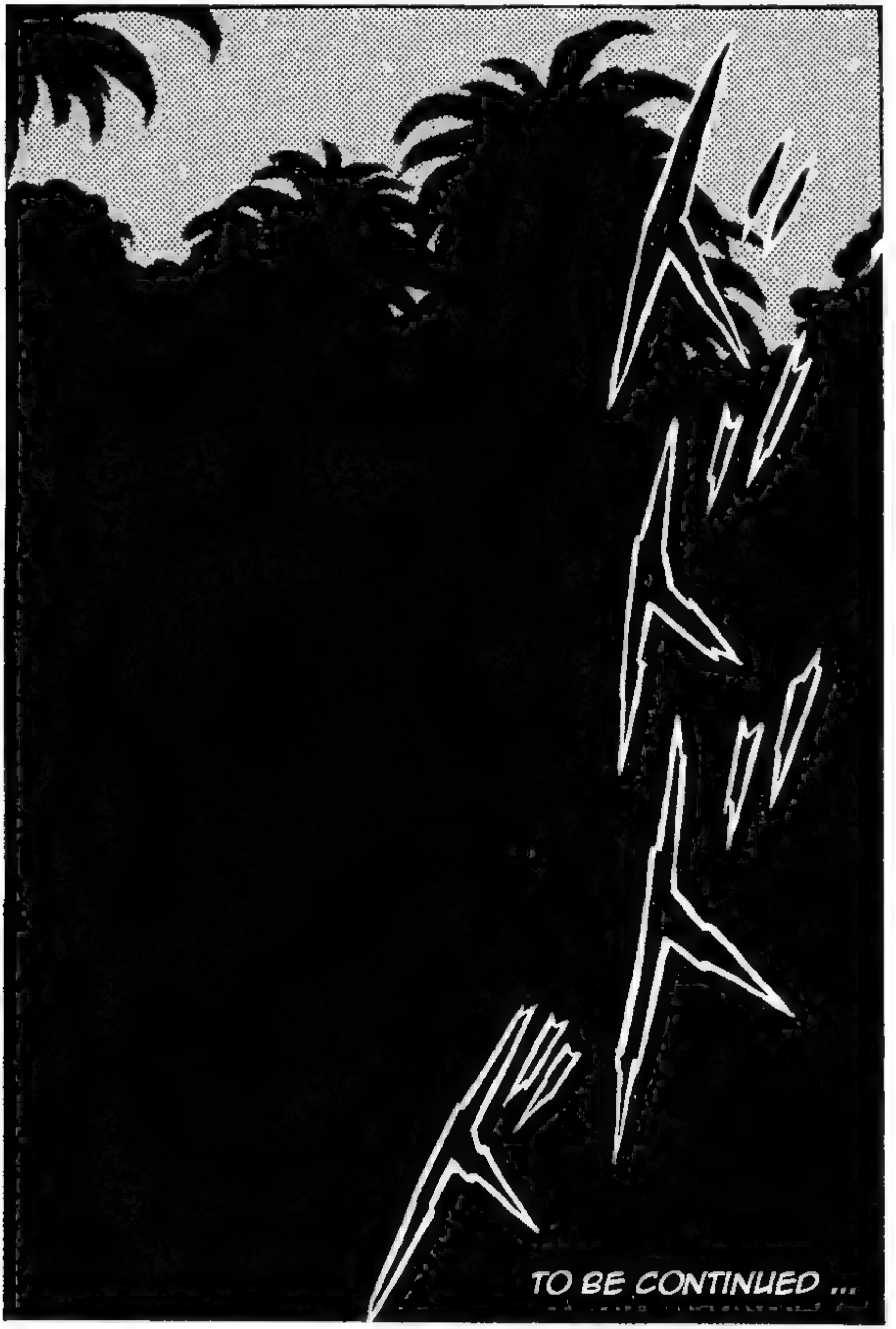
THE NIGHT MAYFLY (PART 1 OF 2)

IN TIMES OF UTTER CHAOS ONLY INSECTS POSSESS THE ABILITY TO ACCURATELY IDENTIFY THEIR OPPONENTS. THIS IS TRUE FOR BOTH THEIR ENEMIES AND ALLIES.

– LE FABRE, 1868

WHAT?!?

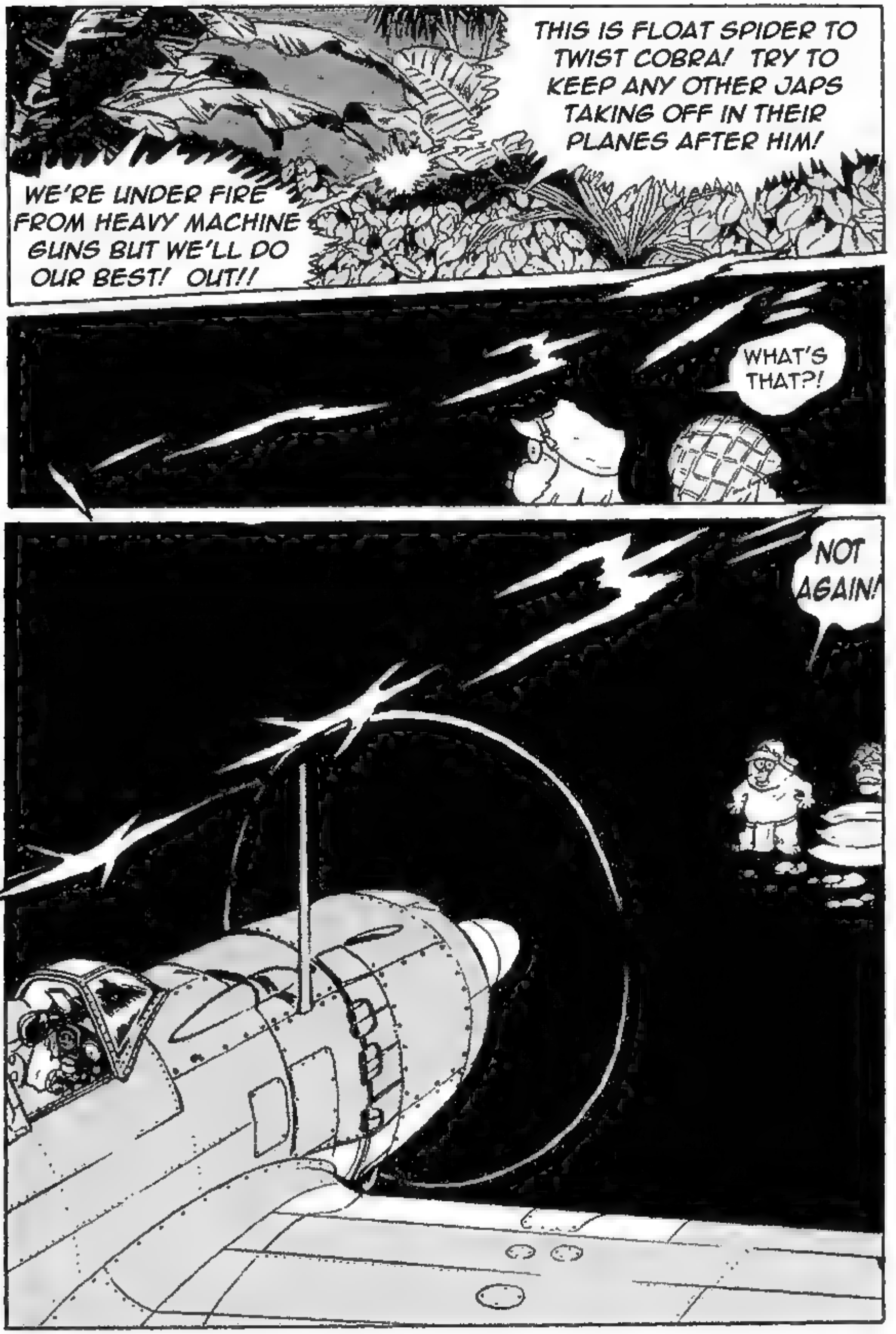
SHOOT IT DOWN! SHOOT IT DOWN!! THAT'S NOT ONE OF OUR PILOTS IN THERE!!!


TO BE CONTINUED ...

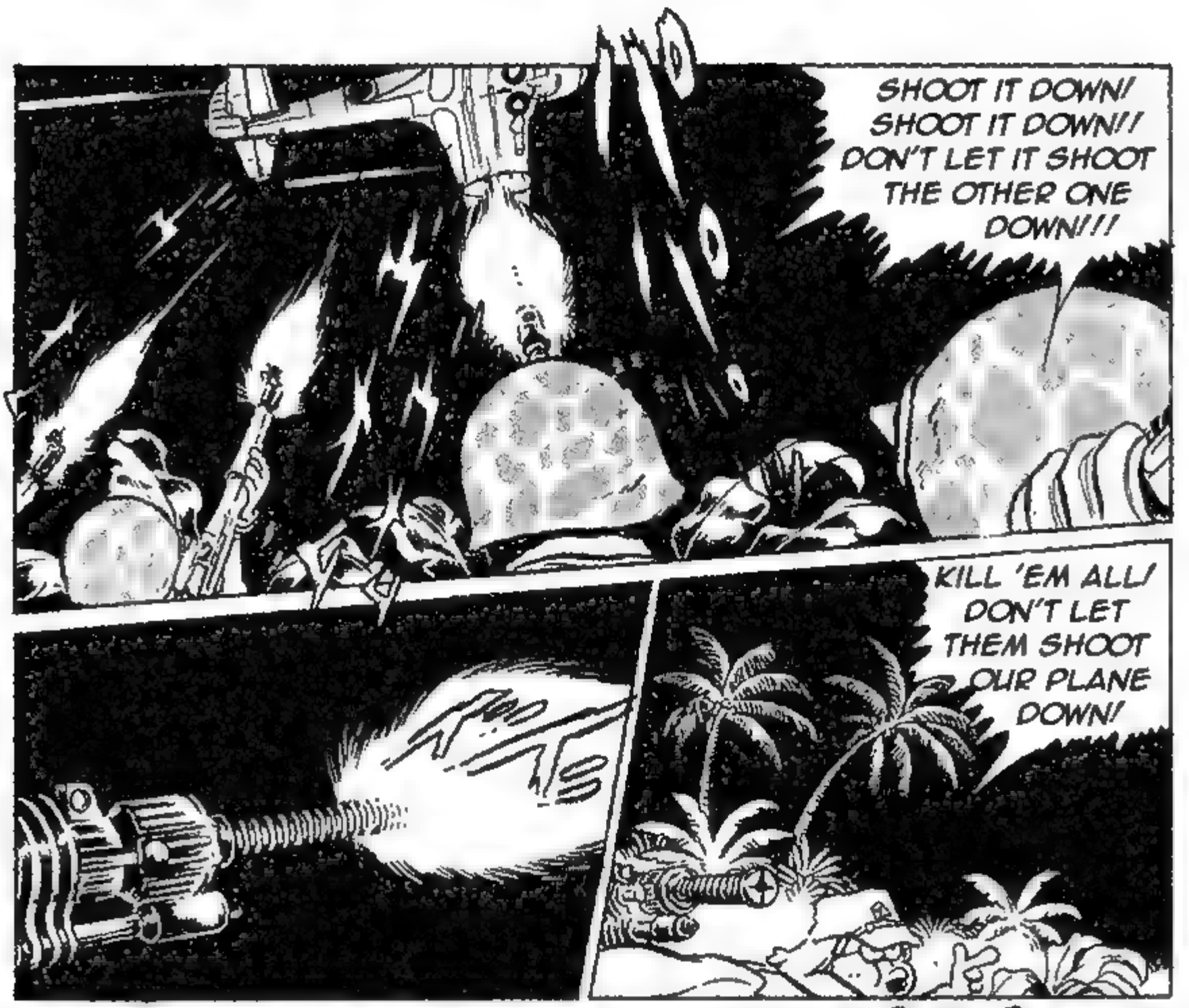
THE NIGHT MAYFLY (PART 2 OF 2)

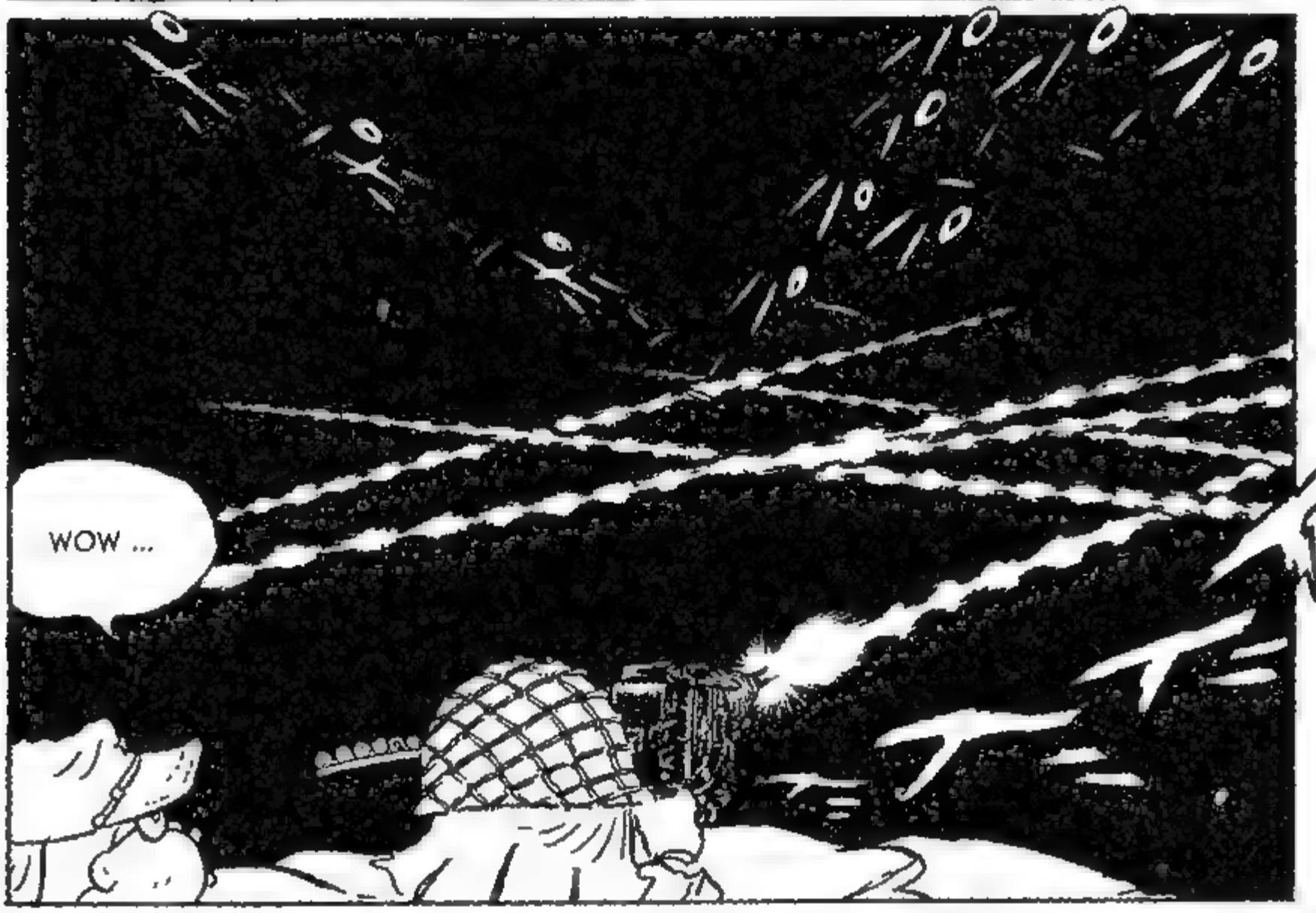
THE NIGHT MAYFLY
(PART 2 OF 2)

TWIST COBRA TO FLOAT SPIDER! TWIST COBRA TO FLOAT SPIDER! LT. CLAIRE HAS APPARENTLY HIJACKED A JAP FIGHTER AND TAKEN OFF! I REPEAT ... !!


THIS IS FLOAT SPIDER TO TWIST COBRA! TRY TO KEEP ANY OTHER JAPS TAKING OFF IN THEIR PLANES AFTER HIM!
WE'RE UNDER FIRE FROM HEAVY MACHINE GUNS BUT WE'LL DO OUR BEST! OUT!!
WHAT'S THAT?!
NOT AGAIN!

THAT'S ONE OF OURS! DON'T SHOOT AT IT! HE'S GOING AFTER THE PLANE THAT GOT STOLEN!


SHOOT IT DOWN! SHOOT IT DOWN!! DON'T LET IT SHOOT THE OTHER ONE DOWN!!!
KILL 'EM ALL! DON'T LET THEM SHOOT OUR PLANE DOWN!


WOW ...

THE NIGHT MAYFLY (PART 2 OF 2)

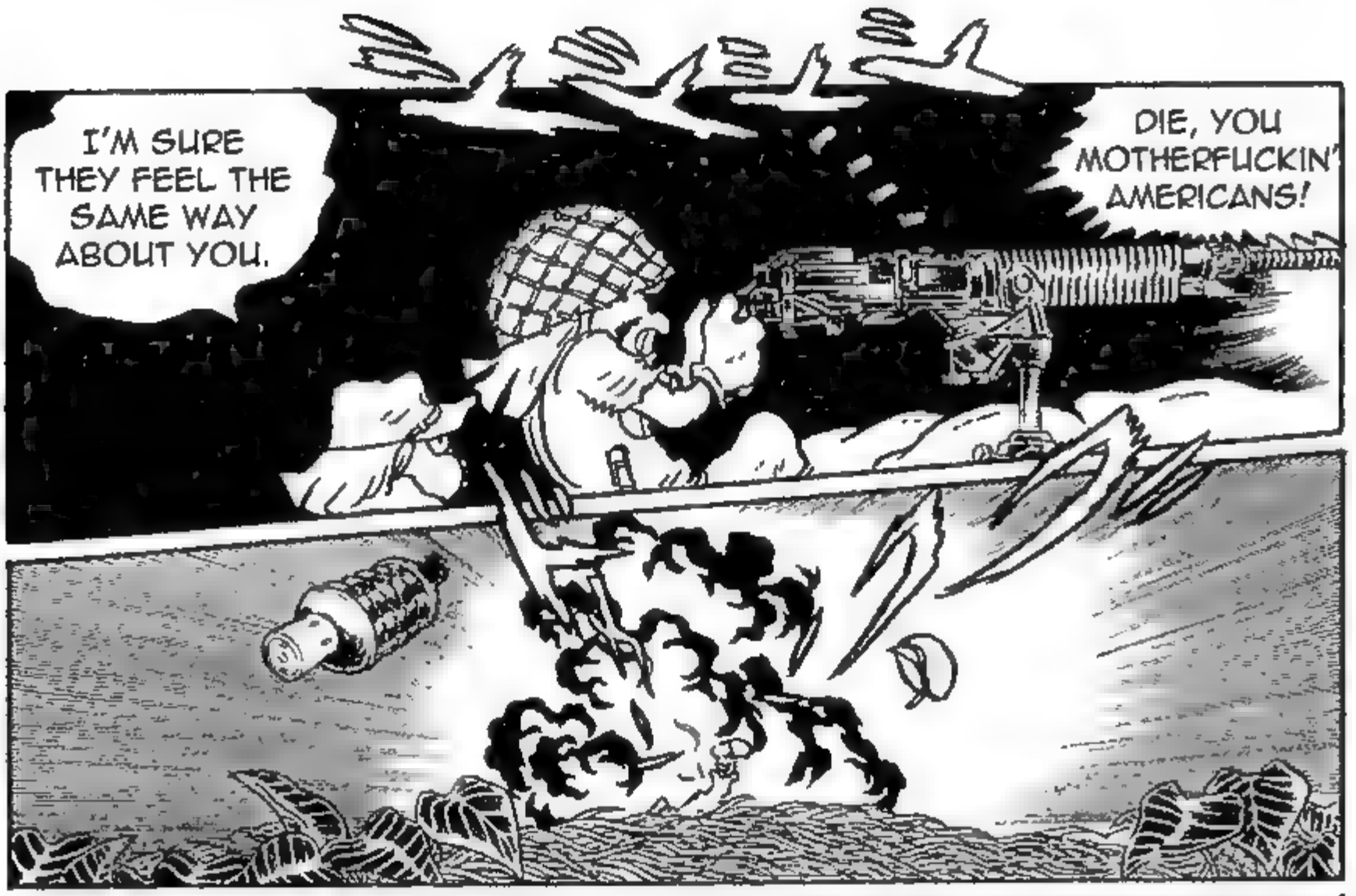
I WOULDN'T WANT TO BE CAUGHT IN THAT.

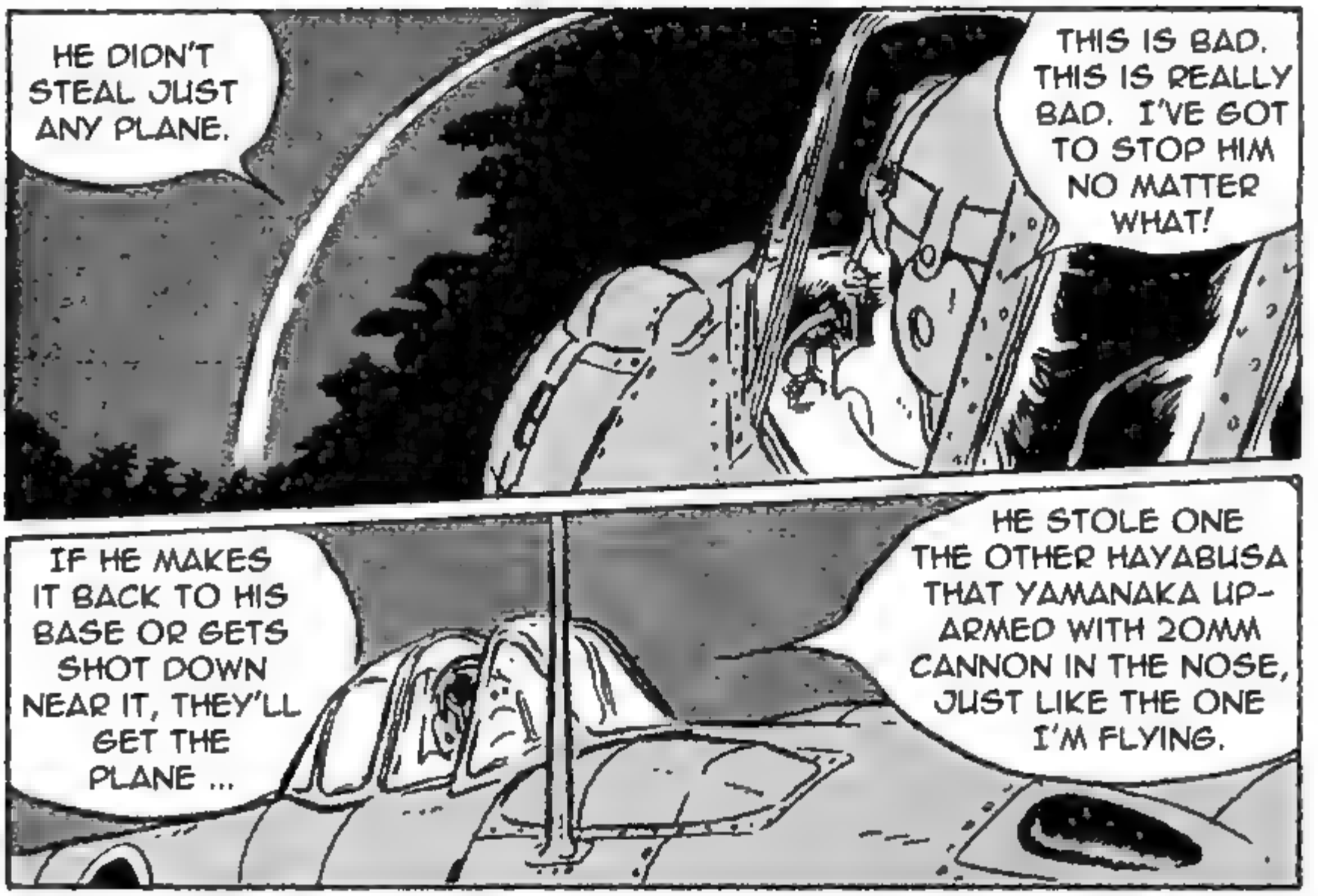
WOULD YOU LOOK AT ALL OF THAT GUNFIRE?

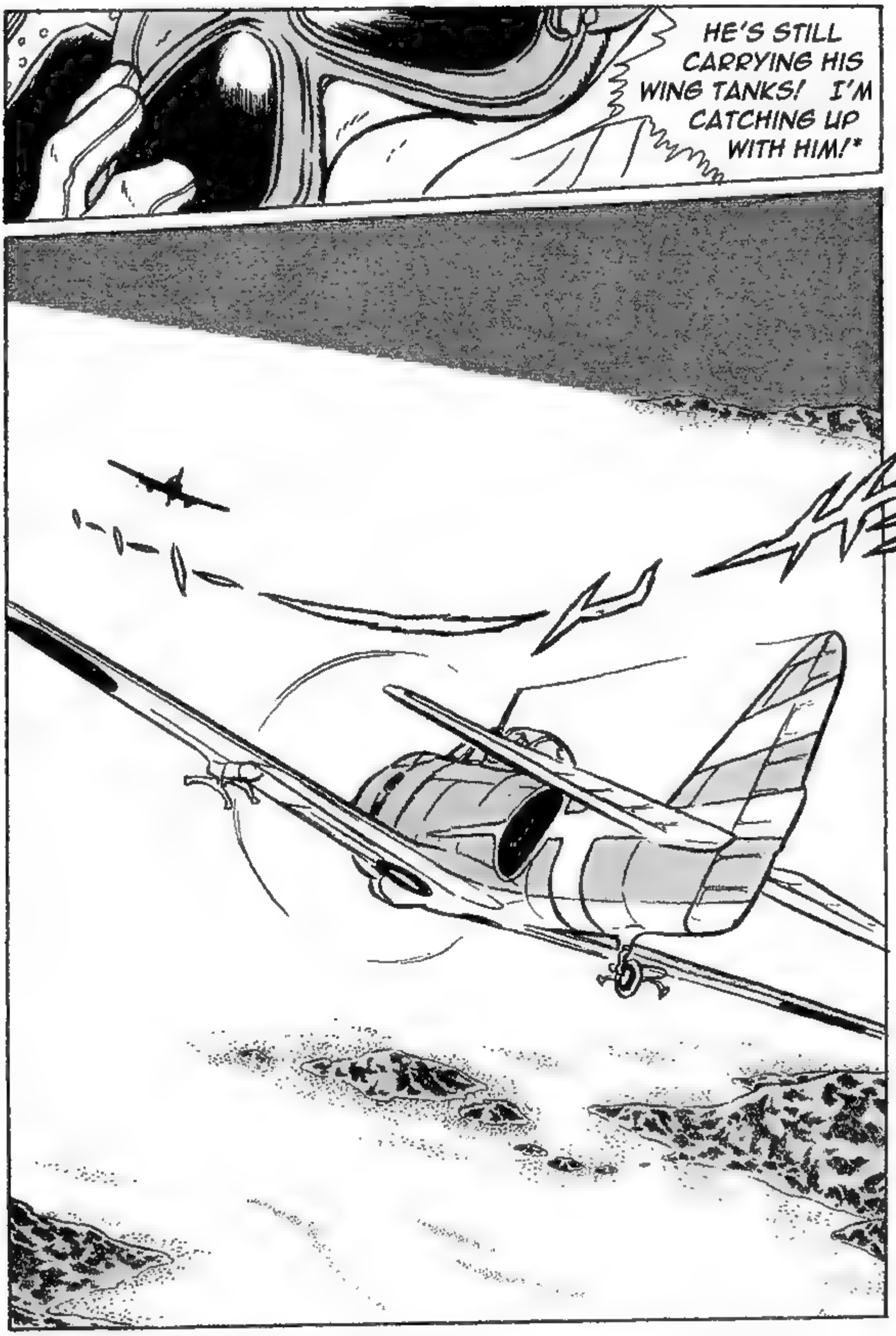
HEY! THE AMERICANS ARE STARTING TO FIRE ON EACH OTHER!

KNOCK THAT OFF! WE'RE ON YOUR SIDE!! WE CAN'T TELL WHO IS WHO OUT HERE!

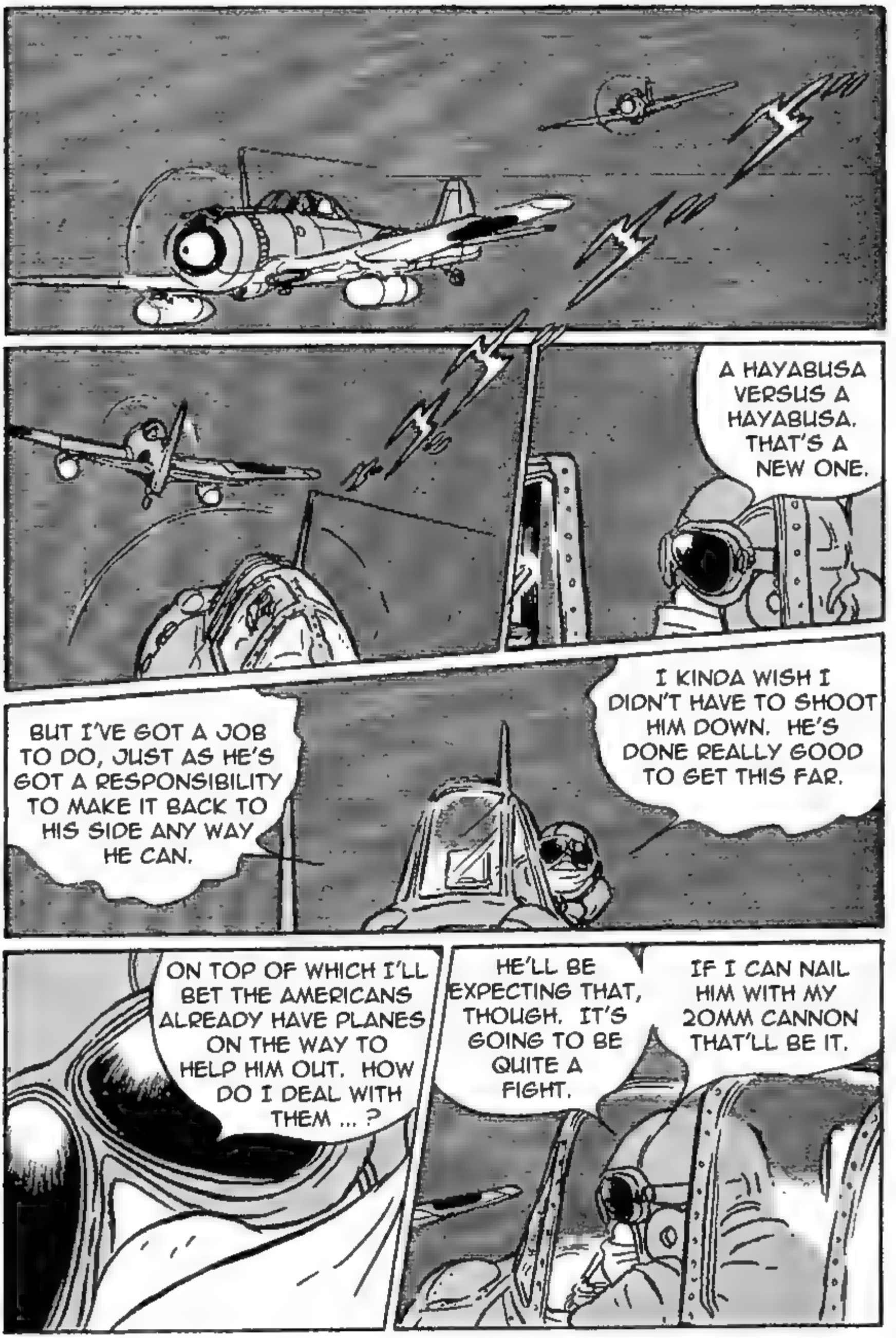
WE NEED TO FORM A HEDGEHOG!


I'M SURE THEY FEEL THE SAME WAY ABOUT YOU.
DIE, YOU MOTHERFUCKIN' AMERICANS!


HE DIDN'T STEAL JUST ANY PLANE.
THIS IS BAD. THIS IS REALLY BAD. I'VE GOT TO STOP HIM NO MATTER WHAT!
IF HE MAKES IT BACK TO HIS BASE OR GETS SHOT DOWN NEAR IT, THEY'LL GET THE PLANE ...
HE STOLE ONE THE OTHER HAYABUSA THAT YAMANAKA UP-ARMED WITH 20MM CANNON IN THE NOSE, JUST LIKE THE ONE I'M FLYING.
... AND THEY'LL FIND OUT ABOUT YAMANAKA'S MOD.
I'VE GOT TO SHOOT HIM DOWN OVER THE DEEP OCEAN. THAT WAY THE PLANE WILL SINK AND THERE'S NO WAY THAT THE AMERICANS CAN RECOVER IT. I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN DO THIS!



(*) PERHAPS HE HASN'T YET FIGURED OUT WHERE THE RIGHT SWITCH IS, GIVEN THAT EVERYTHING INSIDE HIS COCKPIT HAS JAPANESE LABELS.

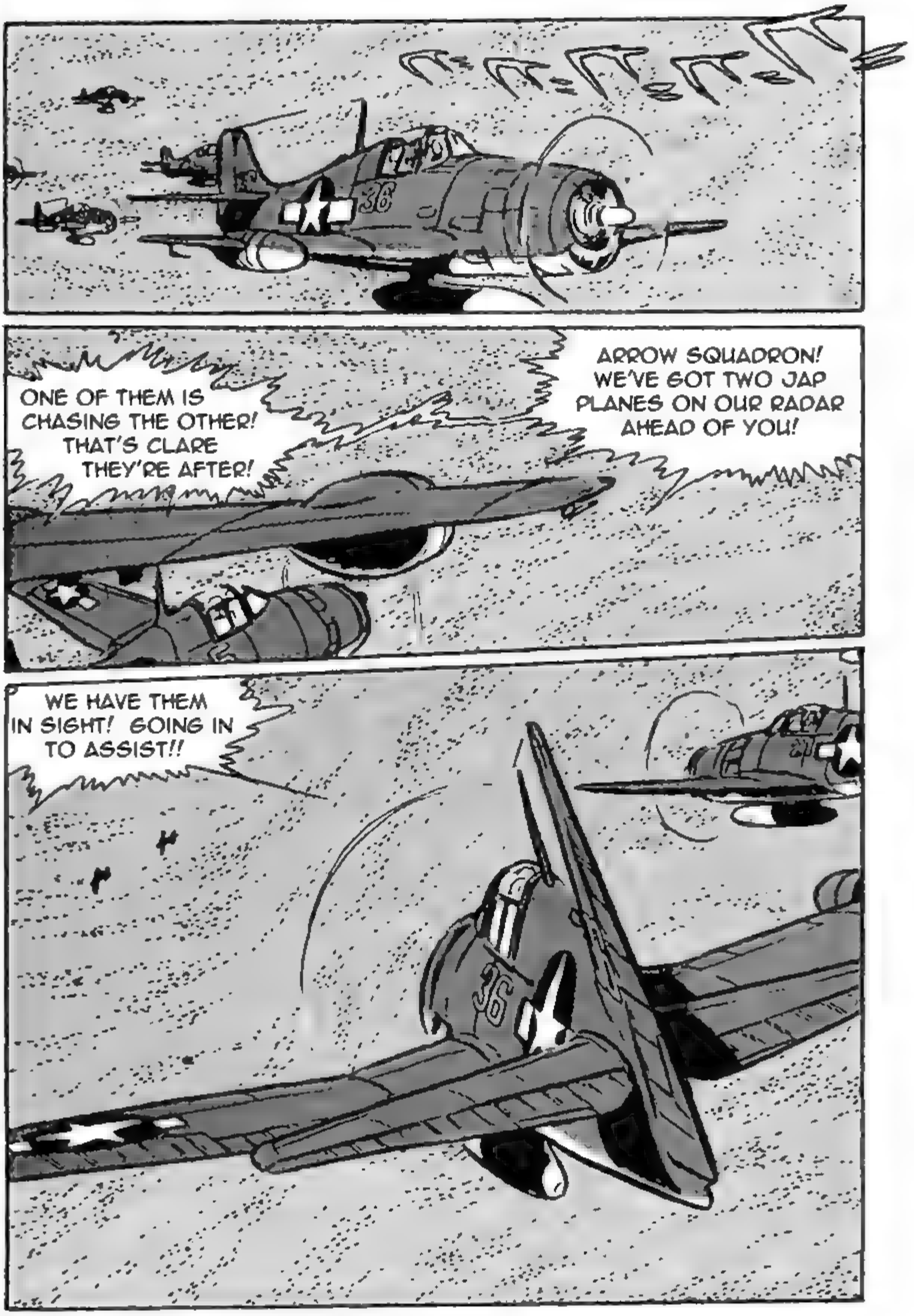

A HAYABUSA VERSUS A HAYABUSA. THAT'S A NEW ONE.
I KINDA WISH I DIDN'T HAVE TO SHOOT HIM DOWN. HE'S DONE REALLY GOOD TO GET THIS FAR.
BUT I'VE GOT A JOB TO DO, JUST AS HE'S GOT A RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE IT BACK TO HIS SIDE ANY WAY HE CAN.
ON TOP OF WHICH I'LL BET THE AMERICANS ALREADY HAVE PLANES ON THE WAY TO HELP HIM OUT. HOW DO I DEAL WITH THEM ... ?
HE'LL BE EXPECTING THAT, THOUGH. IT'S GOING TO BE QUITE A FIGHT.
IF I CAN NAIL HIM WITH MY 20MM CANNON THAT'LL BE IT.

LET'S FINISH THIS!

GOOD! HE'S WELL WITHIN MY 20 MM CANNON RANGE!

BETTER THINK OF SOMETHING ELSE, FAST!

SHIT! HE FIGURED OUT HOW TO DROP HIS AUXILIARY FUEL TANKS! NOW WE'RE EVENLY MATCHED!


ONE OF THEM IS CHASING THE OTHER! THAT'S CLARE THEY'RE AFTER!
ARROW SQUADRON! WE'VE GOT TWO JAP PLANES ON OUR RADAR AHEAD OF YOU!
WE HAVE THEM IN SIGHT! GOING IN TO ASSIST!!

THE NIGHT MAYFLY (PART 2 OF 2)

GOOD POINT.

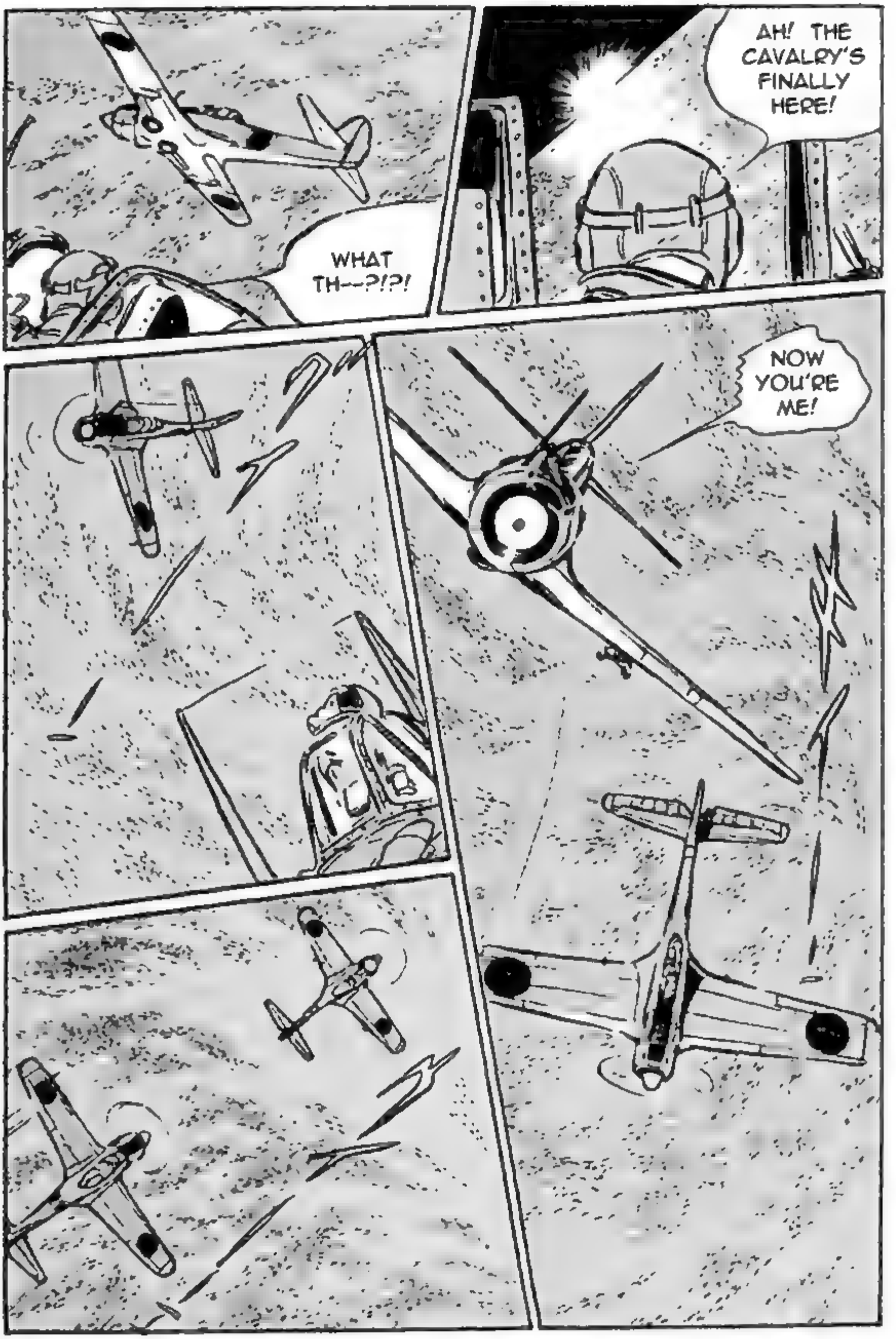
SIR! IF THEY'RE ALREADY FIGHTING EACH OTHER THEN HOW CAN WE TELL WHICH ONE IS CLAIRE AND WHICH ISN'T?

HEY ...

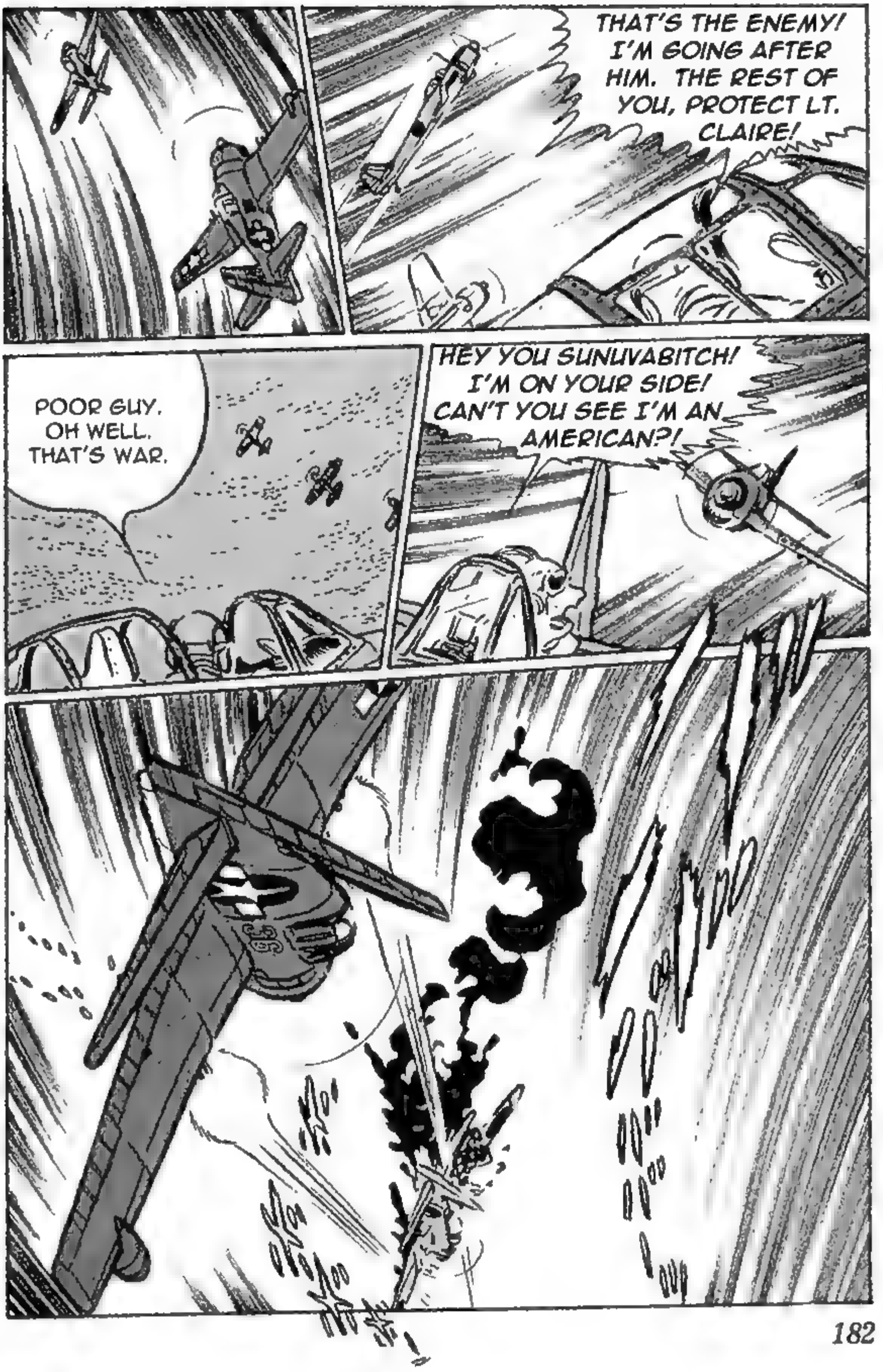
LET'S HANG BACK AND MONITOR JAPANESE RADIO BANDS FOR CLAIRE'S VOICE!

THAT GIVES ME AN IDEA, ASSUMING HE HASN'T FIGURED OUT THE RADIO.

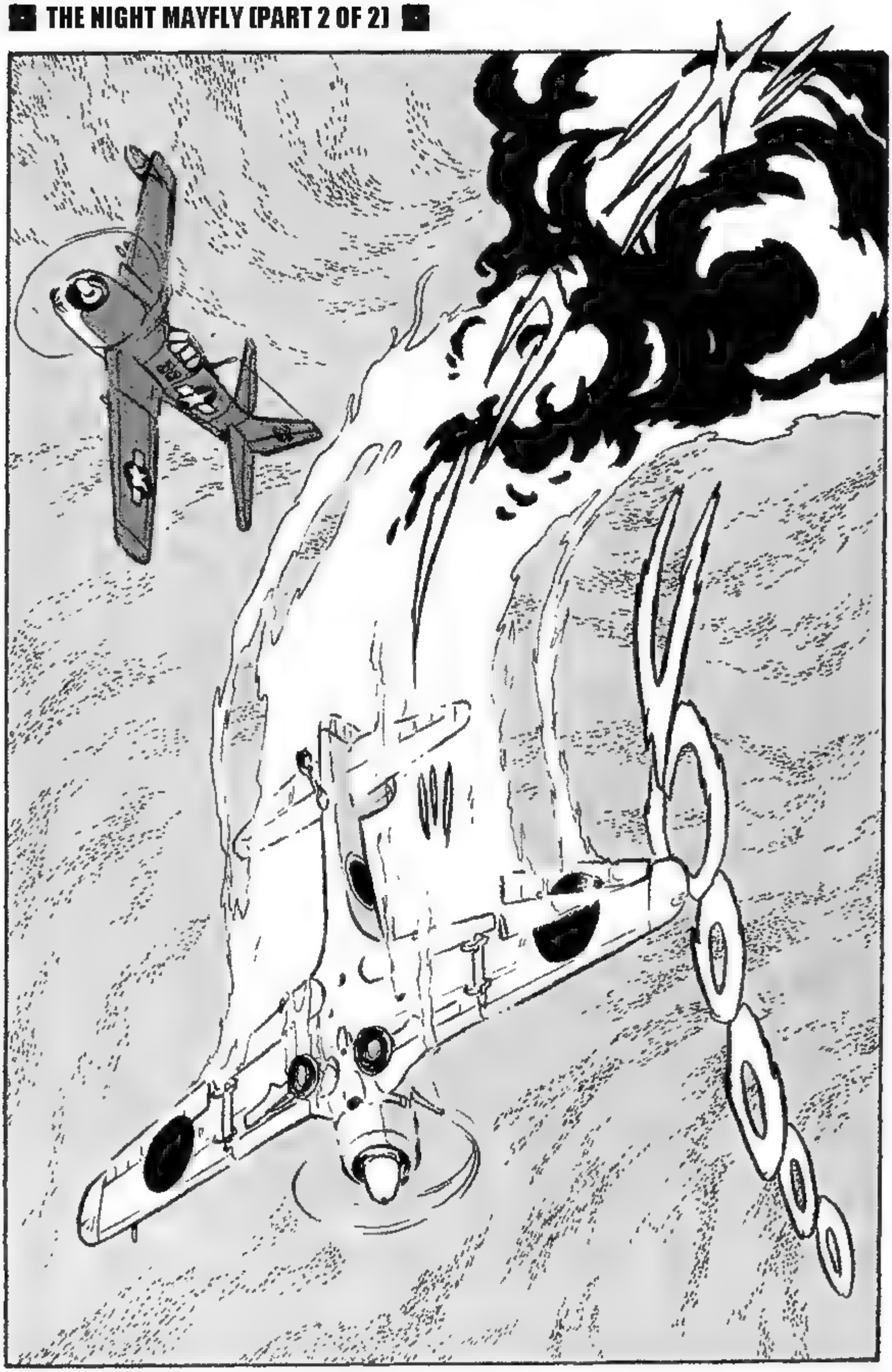
THEY'RE WAITING! THEY CAN'T TELL US APART!


WHAT TH—?!?!
AH! THE CAVALRY'S FINALLY HERE!
NOW YOU'RE ME!

THE NIGHT MAYFLY (PART 2 OF 2)


THAT'S THE ENEMY! I'M GOING AFTER HIM. THE REST OF YOU, PROTECT LT. CLAIRE!
POOR GUY. OH WELL. THAT'S WAR.
HEY YOU SUNUVABITCH! I'M ON YOUR SIDE! CAN'T YOU SEE I'M AN AMERICAN?!

THE NIGHT MAYFLY (PART 2 OF 2)



THIS IS ARROW LEADER TO ALL ARROWS IN THE QUIVER. MISSION ACCOMPLISHED. LET'S ESCORT OUR LOST PILOT BACK HOME.

UH-OH. WHAT NOW?

I FEEL LIKE A CREEP NOW.

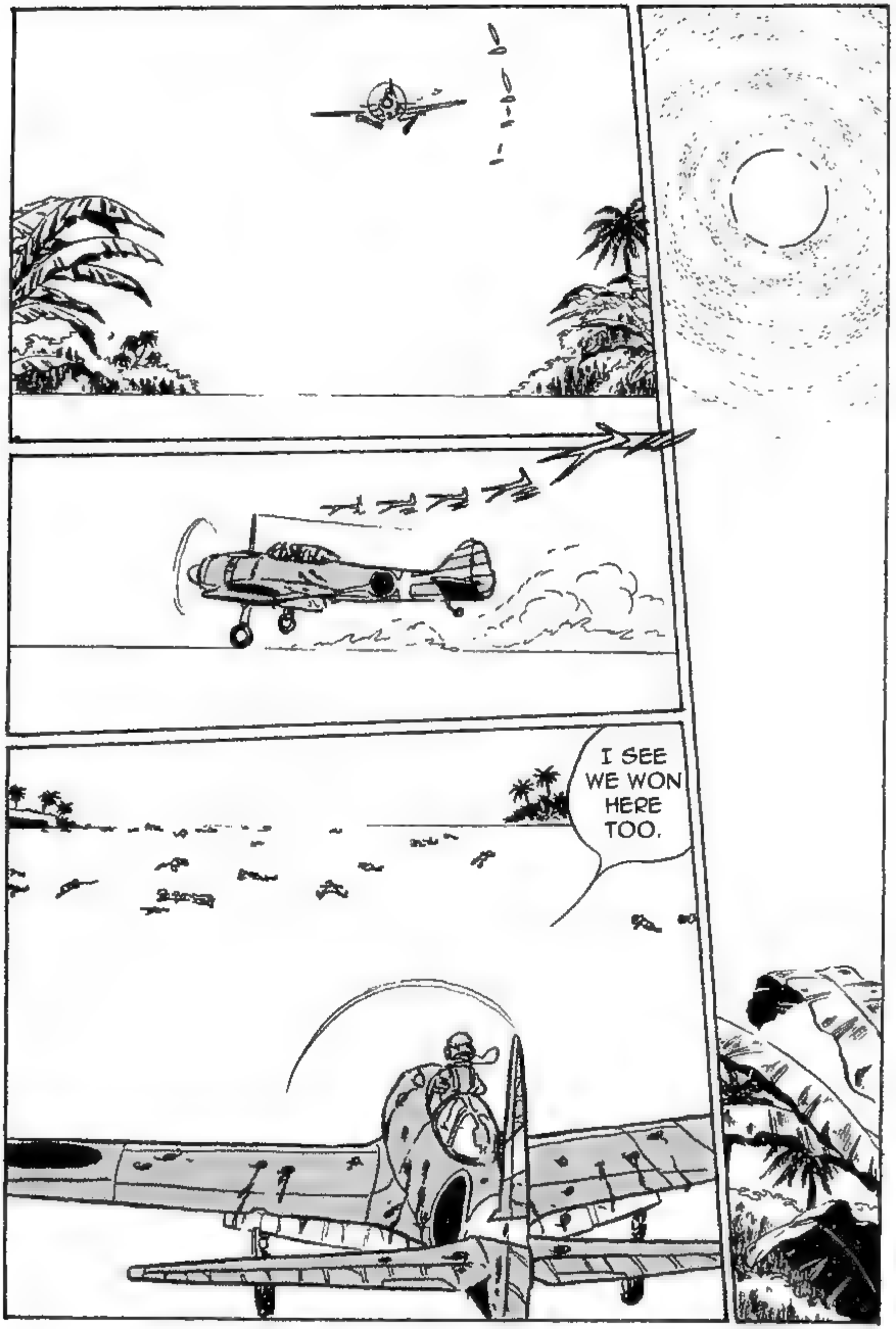
SO YOU THINK I'M WHOEVER IT WAS, EH? I'M NOT HIM!

SON OF A BITCH!

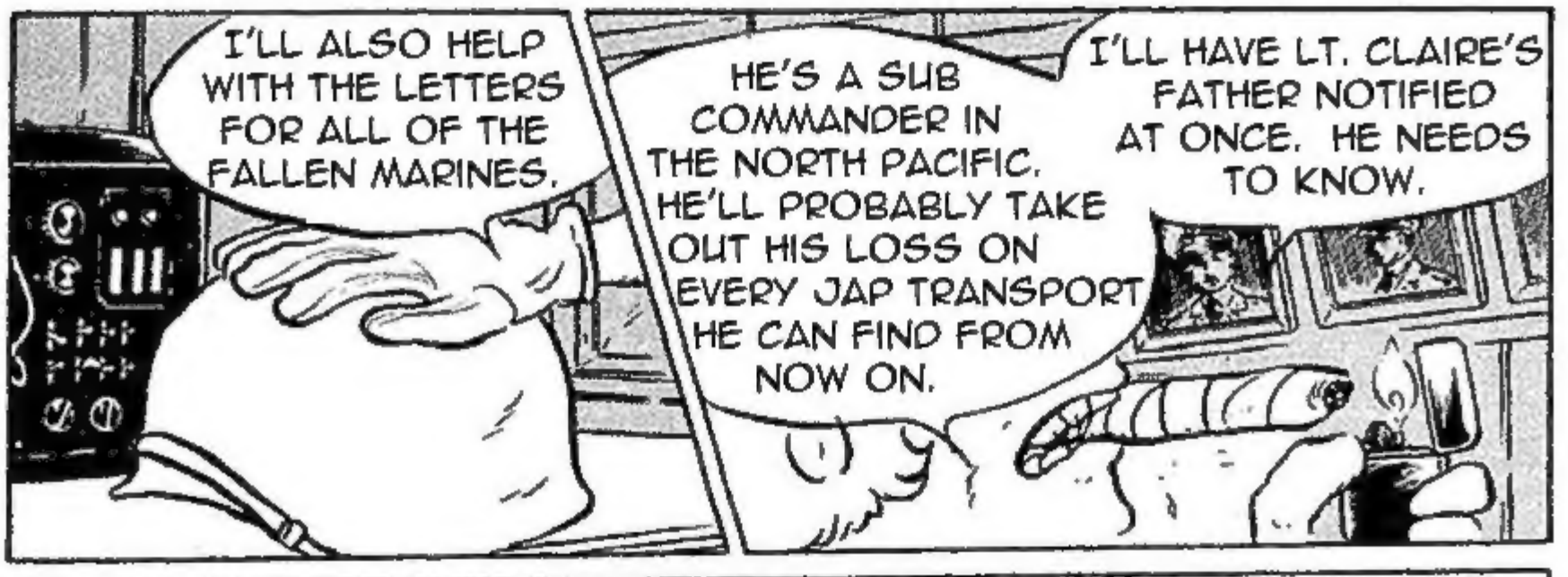
ARROW LEADER!!!

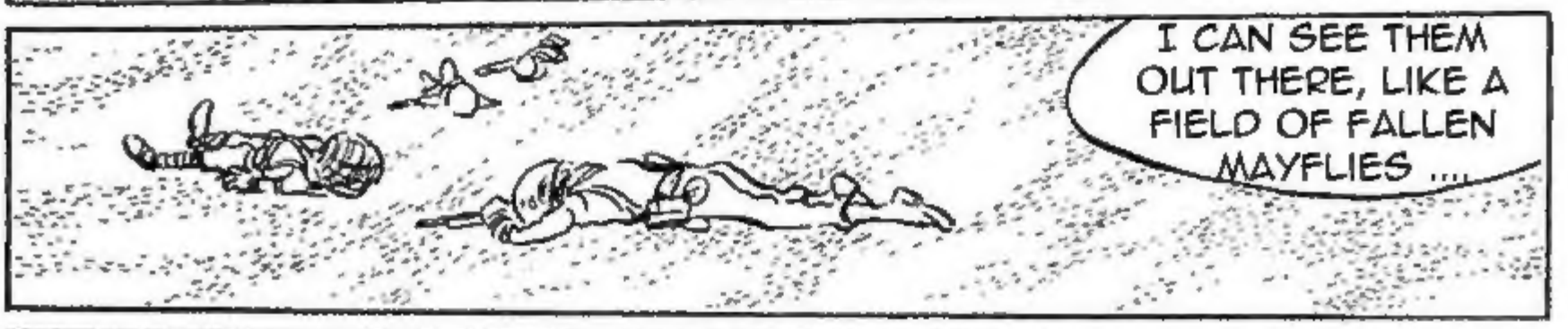
THE BOSS SHOT DOWN THE WRONG PLANE!

THE NIGHT MAYFLY (PART 2 OF 2)


I SEE WE WON HERE TOO.

THE NIGHT MAYFLY (PART 2 OF 2)





(Published in Big Comic Original, January 20th and February 5th, 1978 issues)

MANDELISMS

"The Night Mayfly" is the last of Matsumoto's two-part wartime tales to appear in *The Cockpit* series. While its basic plot is original, that of a downed U.S. Navy pilot stealing a Japanese plane in a determined effort to escape back to his side of the war, it contains many elements we've seen before in other of Matusmoto's wartime tales. We've got an unlikely "heroic trio," just as we did in "Black Widow: The Demon Machine" and "A Year Full of Sunny Weather." We got "what if" military technology getting its fictional time to shine in the sun and I'll be getting back to that point in a bit. We've got arrogant Americans who are too confident for their own good. We've got Japanese who are not only quite capable but who in the end outthink, outfight, and beat those same Americans. Shut up, American peanut gallery (smile). Remember what I said earlier about who wrote these and for who, okay? And so on. To put it another way it's a new plot but one laced with plenty of elements already familiar with *The Cockpit* series. Does that sound better? (smile again).

This tale's featured wartime technology is named in the original text by Matsumoto himself. It's the never-produced *otsu* or "IIIb" up-armed variant of the well-known Nakajima Ki-43 Hayabusa, or "Oscar" as was its Allied code name at the time. What made it different from a standard "Oscar" was the addition of twin 20mm cannon mounted over its nose kind of like the Nakajima Ki-44 Shoji up-armed variant featured back in Volume 1's "High Altitude Fighter." Unlike that the up-armed Oscar never got beyond the prototype stage for a very good reason, and that was it being abandoned in favor of developing what became the excellent Nakajima Ki-84 Hayate, or "Frank" per its Allied code name. That was superior in almost every way so that's understandable. Nevertheless and per the historical record two uparmed Type IIIb Hayabusa were made as prototypes for testing the concpet, so that's from where Matsumoto got that. He does like he did in "The Iron Tombstone" in getting these prototypes out in the field for acutal combat in his fiction (NOTE - I made them local aircraft mechanic mods for more believability) so they finally get the chance then never had in real life to strut their stuff. Now you know ... the rest of the story.

I didn't mention this before, but another common theme of Matsumoto's that we see in this story is using the life of the mayfly as an analogy for death. We first saw this in "Mekong Sunset" back at the end of Volume 2, and it's one he also used in several of his science fiction stories published in other works such as *Yozigen Sekai*. This image came from Matsumoto's own childhood growing up in rural Japan and his personally witnessing the lives and deaths of mayfly swarms every year. It's an element of his tales that deserves further exploration but I'll leave that up to the true scholars in this fertile field of fiction.

Folks, I'm going to go ahead and apologize for the poor quality of the Part I translation. As with earlier tales Google Translate AI really let me down in multiple places, and in many of those I had to flat-out guess what was going on with the dialogue. I fear I've gotten far more wrong than I got right or perhaps even close, and like I said I apologize. Hopefully I got the gist of the story if nothing else, and given the fact no one else seemed at the time to want to translate this for Western audiences you're stuck with my imperfect attempt until somebody else steps forward.

Only one more volume to go in the original nine volumes (tankoban edition) of *The Cockpit*! See you then!

Rising Thunderbolt Battlefield Manga Series 8

Shonen Sunday Comics

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by TAKEYAN